

THE
WORKS
OF THE
CALEDONIAN BARDS,

TRANSLATED FROM THE

GALIC,

By JOHN CLARK, F. S. A, Scot.

SECOND EDITION.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

WHEN the following poems first made their appearance, the Translator was greatly astonished to hear that some doubts were entertained with respect to their authenticity, by persons who were strangers to the language which contained the originals. No other objections, however, could have given him so little uneasiness, as none could have been so easily removed.

To resign his pretensions to those foibles; and that weakness which he inherits as one of the human race, would be laying claim to a superior degree of insensibility, which the Translator of these poems neither pretends to possess, nor wishes to acquire. He, therefore, very frankly acknowledges, that, if the poems in his possession had really been his own composition, he would find it a difficult matter to prevail

vail on his vanity to resign the merit of them to a class of authors, whose mouldering ashes would regard, with equal indifference, the loudest acclamations of applause, or the detracting whispers of the keenest censure.

Their authenticity, however, remains no longer a matter of doubt. Although the Translator could by no means relish the compliments paid to his ingenuity at the expence of his integrity, by some of his neighbours in South Britain, who insinuated that he himself was the *original* author ; yet he did not think it prudent to enter into a literary controversy with anonymous writers. The Rev. Mr William Shaw, however, at length appeared against him, and having prefixed his name to his animadversions, afforded the Translator an opportunity of producing vouchers for the existence of the originals.—The merits of that controversy are

are too well known to require any illustration here.

The Translator now resigns them, for ever to their fate.—Having sufficiently removed every suspicion with respect to his *veracity*, he is little—very little, concerned with regard to his reputation as an *author*. The innocent foibles of youth which prompted him to enter the field of literature are now over ; nor did his vanity lead him to prefix his name to the work, until he saw it attacked in public as a forgery. To have screened himself longer behind the curtain, would favour of pusillanimity ; and to have deserted a truth which he was able to defend, would merit a more ungracious appellation. He hopes, however, in future, to direct his attention to objects more beneficial to the public and himself.

To

T O

George Buchan-Hepburn,

OF SMEATON, ESQ;

S I R,

A Warm and disinterested attachment to the antiquities of my native country, first induced me to undertake the following translations: A simular impulse of gratitude and esteem now prompts me to address the work to you. A consciousness of integrity, however, was not sufficient to fortify me against a melancholy reflection which has often obtruded its humiliating image on the reluctant mind, that dedications in general are viewed in a light not altogether favourable to their authors.

But an occurrence has lately happened, which effectually relieves me from every scruple of that nature. Before this reaches you, I shall be in a
quarter

quarter of the globe where your interest cannot advance mine, and where those animating beams of friendship, which have so often cheered me on this side of the Atlantic, can no longer reach me.

Permit me, then, Sir, as the last favour which I shall probably have an opportunity of asking from you, to place the juvenile offspring of my solitary hours under your protection. By this request, I am only adding to a burden which I ought to have diminished. But the appearances of objects depend on the light in which they are viewed, and the genius of different ages may vary. That littleness of mind, which gives birth to national prejudice, may yet shrink abashed before the liberal sunbeams of approaching years.

When the crushing wheels of mistaken policy have accomplished their final triumph over the language, spirit,
and

and genius of the Highlanders, the present work will probably be glanced over as a fragment relative to the manners of a people who *have been*. It will then perhaps give no displeasure to your descendants to be informed, that the Translator of these poems was encouraged by the countenance, improved by the learning, and protected by the generosity of one of their ancestors ; and that the present address was adopted, not as the most proper, but as the only method left him of acknowledging a debt which he could never hope to pay. I am, with sincere esteem and affection,

S I R,

Your much obliged, and most
faithful humble servant,

Edin. June 10. 1783.

JOHN CLARK.

P R E F A C E.

A MIND, eager to examine the appearance of nature in her simplest garb, and solicitous to contemplate the extent of her power, without the aid of art, must enjoy a rational pleasure from the poetical compositions of the Celtic bards. No set of men ever displayed greater knowledge of the avenues which lead directly to the heart. They first arrived at eminence, by the exertion of superior talents; and the industry with which they cultivated the human mind soon rendered the order venerable. They maintained their exalted station on principles, of which the voice of reason and philosophy most approve. They did not terrify weak minds into the belief of preposterous hypotheses, which they could not demonstrate, nor overawe the populace, by pretending to have intercourse with oracles, and being the favourites of any divinity. Their aim was to fill the minds of their

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hearers

6 P R E F A C E.

hearers with great and liberal sentiments ; to make them enamoured of heroism ; and to inspire their hearts with that generous love to mankind, which constitutes the happiness and dignity of human nature.

Modern œconomy, however, seems to entertain a very different opinion of the merits of the bards, and represents them as a set of useless, lazy vagrants, who subsisted on the industry of others ; and assures us, we have little reason to regret the extinction of their order. But this is not the only case where the voice of censure has advanced assertions in the face of facts, and directly opposite to the principles of fair reasoning.

The warmest advocates for the perfections of human nature, will readily allow, that the heart of man still requires some cultivation ; and, although a proper field for nourishing, will not, of its own accord, produce certain plants. Conscious of this truth, mankind have, in all ages, contributed towards the support of individuals, who were supposed

posed to be wiser than the rest, for the purpose of improving the heart. These have generally extended their influence, not in proportion to their own abilities, but the weakness of their constituents; and few of them, like the Celtic bards, have lived up to the tenets they professed; for no instance can be found of one of these aspiring to wealth or power, but have, on all occasions, expressed the keenest contempt for every other gratification, but that of inspiring their patrons with magnanimity, and their countrymen with heroism. Living thus beyond the reach of corruption, their compositions are the genuine offspring of their untainted minds; and, though now dragged from their antient dignity, they have left monuments behind them, sufficient to proclaim their former splendour.

The common people in the Highlands of Scotland are, at this day, endowed with a poetical taste for nervous composition, far superior to that subsisting among the same class of men in any other nation of Europe,
with

P R E F A C E.

with all the boasted refinements introduced by the propagation of learning in later ages. Locked up for many centuries in an unfertile corner of an island, and, by the locality of their language, deprived of all intercourse with the rest of mankind, modern improvement can lay no claim to the establishment of this poetical taste. To account for it, by ascribing to the Highlanders talents superior to their southern brethren, might savour of rashness, presumption, and partiality; but, to attribute this advantage to the superiority of their language, is asserting, what I hope convincingly to prove, by occasional remarks annexed to these poems.

The majesty, and beautiful energy of the Galic, appear no where so conspicuous, as when a translation of the compositions it contains is attempted. While the original poems found among the Highlanders are rehearsing before us, the mind is captivated by the interesting scenes described. The subject is wrapped up in
those

those agreeable and pathetic terms, which dart, with irresistible force, upon the minds of the hearers. All the powers of attention are roused. Every contemplating faculty is collected into one point, and rendered incapable to act on any subject which is not immediately connected with the present sensations of the heart. The mind, thus pre-engaged, is not at liberty to make a minute inquiry concerning the causes from whence these agitations flow.

This is one reason why the natives of the Highlands are high-passioned, rash, and ungovernable in their tempers. The images of objects are painted in colours so glowing, that, when disagreeable, the mind loses all command. Even when a Highlandman has long resided in the low countries, early habit leads him to think in Galic; and, such is the energy and force of this language, that he often breaks out into a rage, at circumstances which appear perfectly trifling, when spoken or conceived in English. But, when a translator attempts
to

to delineate these sentiments in any other language, he will find them stripped of so many comprehensive terms, and poetical flowers, peculiar to the Galic, that the perusal of them must be in danger of disgusting those who are acquainted with the originals.

The antient poems still extant in the Galic, exhibit a picture of the Caledonians so different from that given them in history, that one could scarcely imagine them to be the same people, if the manners and customs alluded to in these poems did not subsist at this day among the Highlanders. The transactions of the western nations, beyond a certain period, are wrapped up in a misty veil, which the breath of modern criticism has, in vain, endeavoured to expel. This cloud, however, was not altogether, as hath been generally imagined, a consequence of their being destitute of the use of letters. This defect, though material, their language was amazingly calculated to supply; and, had they not been crushed by the
superior

superior cunning of aspiring tyrants, there is great reason to conclude, that the introduction of literature would have met with several oral registers kept with great exactness, by which their account of themselves might be traced back for an incredible space of time. The purity with which the poems of Ossian, Morguth, Deal, and many other bards, both in Scotland and Ireland, have been handed down to our own days, are sufficient to support the truth of this assertion.

The Celtic language was constructed on principles the best calculated for preserving as well as describing events. Every accent struck with such force upon the mind, that the memory had little trouble in retaining a composition of great length, and of rehearsing the same after the first or second hearing. Had this language then been cultivated with the same degree of industry that has been bestowed on others far less capable of answering the intended purposes, mankind might have enjoyed several advantages to which they are now strangers. The
drudgery

drudgery of the schools might have been performed with half the present labour, and the study of each science would have become more expeditious.

It is astonishing, that an event so remarkable as that of expelling the language of their ancestors, and adopting that of the Saxons, by the King and Court of Scotland, should be totally overlooked by the historians of that nation. It admits of no doubt, however, that this must have happened during the reign of Malcolm Canmore. He is the last king of Scotland whose name is significant in the Galic. All before him are so, as far as genuine history reaches. The influence of his Queen, Margaret, at a court where she herself was the chief ornament, was successfully exerted to render her language fashionable. The flower of the English, who had fled from the conqueror, shared the distresses, and now tasted the good fortunes of Margaret, could not fail of seconding these efforts. The Saxon language soon became general along the eastern coast
of

of Scotland; which lands, we are informed, Malcolm bestowed on the followers of his Queen. They stepped into the first offices in the kingdom, spread their own language among their domestics and adherents, and banished the Galic to the unfertile mountains, where it has hitherto maintained its existence with surprising fortitude, notwithstanding the various schemes, practised of late, for its final destruction.

We can advance nothing with certainty concerning what period many of the following poems have been composed. Had the Highlanders, like other nations, been accustomed to admit the religious opinions of the times into their works, modern inquiry might have been directed to form tolerable notions concerning the different æras in which their authors lived. But this never was, nor could, with propriety, be expected to be the case. When the Galic language was in the meridian of its splendor, the Christian religion was altogether unknown to the Celtic nations; and, since it hath been introduced a-

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mongst

mongst them, their own language has been much on the decline. This accounts for the extreme meanness to which every poem, on religious subjects, sinks in the Galic. Although a composer may be furnished in that language with a luxuriant richness of nervous expressions, when war, love, or pastoral poetry is the theme, if he change it to religion, he will find his subject dressed in a garb of meanness, from which he will in vain endeavour to rescue it by the most strenuous exertion of all his powers. It is no wonder then, that bards of great parts have sedulously avoided a subject, for which their language could furnish them with no terms. So little mention is made of religion, that the poems composed before and after the introduction of Christianity, are not to be distinguished, except some pieces which have been composed during the two last centuries, which greatly partake of that narrowness of mind, and those illiberal sentiments which distinguish the enthusiastical fanatics of these times, from whom the Highlanders borrow-

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ed such mean and contemptible notions of religion.

But, although the Celtic nations embraced the Romish religion, and adopted all their terms, as they had none of their own, still they were loath to relinquish their favourite FLATHINNIS, or *Happy Isle*, in the western sea, where the ghosts of their fathers were said to reside: ‘Where,’ says Morguth, ‘the bright sun of heaven descends each night, in all the majesty of his flaming beauty, to cheer the warriors of old. There he sits in his hall of splendour. No oaks burn within; no surly blast wanders without. The giver of the morning warms all with his presence. The ghosts of our fathers hearken to his tale from the land of hills. By times they hear of their sons, and listen with ears of attention. Pleasant are the looks of the aged, when their children are mentioned with the sons of fame. But, when they fly from their foes, the souls of their fathers are sad; they hide their dim heads with
‘shame,

‘shame, and fly from the presence of the
‘sun of heaven.’

Frequent descriptions of this nature seem to have realized in the minds of the Celtæ this FLATHINNIS. No wonder, then, that they were reluctant to erase from their breasts all remembrance of a place which their bards had taught them to consider as their eternal home. To be deprived of that happiness which fancy had promised them there, which the bards had described with a falacious kind of demonstration, entirely to resign all pretensions to that paradise, where the ghosts of their fathers were supposed to have gone before them, was not consistent with that paternal fondness which the human mind has, in all ages, discovered for the first principles which superstition imprints on the heart. Heaven, as described by the first propagators of Christianity, they imagined, corresponded, in several respects, with their own FLATHINNIS; and it is reported by tradition, that they would listen to no accounts of any other place of happiness

happiness than that in which they were informed their fathers resided. However that be, it is certain, that heaven has no other name in the Galic to this day, than that of this imaginary island; and, what renders this the more remarkable, there is perhaps no other term respecting religion, in the Galic, that is not literally borrowed from some other language.

It was proposed at first to enter more minutely into a comparison of both languages in the notes; but several gentlemen objected to the inserting any part of the original, as useless to the English reader, for whose benefit alone this work was published. At their desire, therefore, these critical remarks will be annexed to the originals of these poems, which it is proposed to publish soon, as some of these pieces have been collected from the mouths of persons now living in the Highlands, and have not yet been printed in the Galic, owing principally to the small demand for books in that dialect.

The

The present translation was undertaken, with a view to rescue from the ruins of a perishing language, some of those poems which have met with universal applause from the people for whose use they were composed. To these the British nation is indebted for that martial spirit, which the inhabitants of that part of the island have displayed in many of her contests. The Galic bards uniformly inculcate two material principles in the human heart; Never to forsake a friend, nor fear a foe.

Those who are acquainted with the originals, will no doubt be surprised that the translator has passed over compositions of greater merit than those inserted in this volume. But, as he has often been completely mortified, on comparing his own versions with the originals, he was desirous of knowing the judgment of the public concerning his manner of executing these translations. If he shall be so happy as to meet with their approbation, he will proceed with more spirit to the translation of those poems
of

P R E F A C E. 19

of a loftier nature. But, if their sentiments shall coincide with his own, in considering them as inimitable in an English version, he will readily desist from the undertaking, and rest satisfied with having exerted every effort in his power, in vain, to rescue from oblivion the venerable compositions of the CALEDONIAN BARDS.

INTRO.

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INTRODUCTION.

HAIL, oral offspring of the human breath,
 Smooth piercing accents, gift of boun-
 teous heav'n !

Without thy friendly aid the breast of man
 Would burst with the big load of fetter'd thought.
 Nor voice of tale could e'er salute his ear,
 Nor song historic fraught with warlike deeds.
 The fertile bosom of the heavenly bard
 Had been the parent and the grave of songs.
 Mens sons had never heard the deeds of old ;
 Nor wish'd to live in breath of midnight tale.
 Had the tongue mutely roll'd within his mouth,
 Man's life, insipid, had unnotic'd pass'd,
 And been to non-existence much allied.

Then, to the first of Powers, whose mighty art
 Establish'd commerce 'twixt the heart and tongue ;
 To Him, who, from the feeble force of sound,
 Brought accents piercing as the pointed steel ;
 Who form'd the tongue obedient to the will,
 Be the first offspring of that Will address.

Fir'd with the greatness of the liberal gift,
 Which he enjoys above the other sons
 Of nature, who traverse the spreading fields,

The grateful of the race of man shall bend,
In adoration bow the knee to HIM,
From whom the riches of all bounty flow.

Yet, thou penurious, mercenary son
Of narrow soul ! my words seem strange to thee.
Thou never felt one animating ray
Of gratitude to HIM who cloath'd the fields,
And fill'd the waves with riches for thy use.
Thy darken'd soul no harmony can reach.
On thee the sun-beams roll in vain at noon.
His strength, his kindness, he exerts in vain,
To thaw the feelings of thy frozen heart.—
Thou miscreant ! stop the venom of thy breath,
Nor frown so furly on my simple song.
Its fire attempts not to dissolve thy breast.
Listen not to themes you cannot understand,
Nor censure sentiments you never knew.

But thou, O feeling heart, sweet plant of light !
Image of HIM to whom the nations kneel !
To thee, with reverence, I address my song:
To thee I look with expectation's eye,
And earnest wish for approbation's nod;
And where thy purer breath shall mark me wrong,
I'll stand corrected, and receive my doom.

If thus, divided in their various minds,

The

The different hearers of my tale should stand;
The frowns of one as earnest I desire,
As I petition for the other's smile.—

O thou eternal Parent of all pow'r !

Who will'd to being thy unnumber'd worlds,
Who but thyself can show the hidden springs
From which the meanest of thy works proceeds?
Reflecting man, with admiration, feels

His pow'r to publish, or conceal his thoughts.
The organs which perform this wond'rous task,
In close attendance wait upon his will.

His words the hearers ear uninjur'd pierce,
And tell his breast the purport of their flight.
The pow'r of sound, an unexhausted source !
Has furnish'd various languages for man.

These all address the heart in diff'rent tones,
As nations varied under which they grew.
One breathes majestic in a Homer's song,
And draws the battle like the painter's brush.
Virgil, with art, has dress'd another's brow
With flowers, whose blooming lustre ne'er shall
fade.

And thou, O Mother of the Galic muse !
Have I injur'd thee, thus to name thee last ?
Perhaps I have; and, wert thou known like these,

My

My want of judgment had been justly blam'd.

But say, thou parent of the Celtic song!

How comes thy beauties thus to lie conceal'd?

Has no sweet, bold, poetic son of thine,

Held forth thy richness in luxuriant strains?

Hast thou in vain display'd thy breast, adorn'd

With the inviting charms of rhet'ric's pow'r;

And has thy children, of perception void,

With stupid looks beheld thee thus unmov'd?

Interrogation's words are just and strong;

But feeble are the answers we can make.

In vain, alas! we tell the stranger's sons,

Whose eyes cannot behold thy dazzling light,

That bards have sung, and hearers dropt a tear,

As the song pierc'd into the hardest heart:

That gloomy brows have soften'd at the sound;

Insensibility has fled, and left

The noblest passions ruling in the heart.

Thus we, in vain attempt, in borrowed words,

To draw aside the veil that keeps thee hid,

And shew thee to admiring eyes, array'd

In beauty, strength, and majesty sublime.

But thou our efforts baffles all with scorn,

And frowns severely on the foolish bard,

Who strives to dress thee in another garb.

She,

She, whom the feeble song thus serenades,
Was once admir'd, and spoke by nations great.
Inspir'd by her sweet notes, great chiefs and kings
Gain'd fame immortal in the Celtic states.
Her breath gave laws to Europe's spacious plains.
Beneath her spreading wings, a martial race!
The warlike sons of Gaul were known to fame.
In time her multiplying tribes encreas'd;
Too great their bulk for continental bounds.
Then rais'd our fathers, with adventu'rous hand,
The spreading sail, and seiz'd the passing blast,
By whose impetuous breath, with flying speed,
They pass'd the high-swell'd bosom of the waves
To Britain's isle. With liberty they rang'd
Along th' extended plains, and rising brows
Of hills, that rudely rear their lofty heads
Above the dusky clouds of sailing mist,
That travel round the sea-girt, cliffy coast.
There flourish'd long, before the scribing art
Was known, to place their deeds upon record.
Before them Nature spread, with liberal hands,
The choicest riches of the annual crop.
Man tasted, unrestrain'd by pride or pow'r,
The blessings which were giv'n for him to know.
Such

Such was the case, e'er property assum'd
Her selfish claim to all the fertile plains,
Which heav'n had granted for the use of man.

O fatal foe to human nature's race !
Destructive gratitude ! that first taught men
To bend, with reverence, to the worthless son
Of him who glow'd with patriotic zeal !
In vain they hop'd the father's worth would live,
And rashly plac'd him on the seat of pow'r.—
Deluded croud ! your offspring long shall mourn,
In bonds and misery, the hasty deed :
Tyrannic chiefs will wield oppression's rod,
And your sons sink beneath that pow'r you gave.

Fain would the struggling efforts of the bard
Pursue a theme more smooth, less hostile words,
And, in persuasive accents, raise the song
To those whose several beauties fire his breast.—

Daughters of Babel ! by whose oral aid
The numerous sons of Adam have convey'd
Their inward feelings, whether real or forg'd,
Thro' various organs to the kindred mind :
Think not I aim to sing, with breath profane,
In strains detractive of the high renown
Of you, bright messengers of mutual thought,
Whose never absent help conveys, with speed,

Each

Each various wish, with ease from breast to breast.
One of your number has experienc'd woe,
And struggl'd long beneath the frowns of fate.
Dragg'd from her antient greatness, now she lurks
In clifty corners of the British isles.

If beauty in distress should urge my sigh,
Or warm my breast beyond permitted bounds,
Think not your merit has unnotic'd pass'd:
My eyes are open also to your charms.

Come, ghosts of bards, who sung among the
heath

Of Morven's woody hills, on Albion shore !
Say, whether would you wish your song to fall,
And walk majestic to the arms of death,
Array'd in beauty, elegance, and strength;
Or, would you condescend to have it stript
Of that sublimity in which it shines,
And, drest in mean attire, a simple tale
Depriv'd of numbers, energy, and sound,
Permit its import to be told to those,
Who cannot view it in its pristine state?

Consent, great shades ! and I, with sacred awe,
Will look into the treasures ye have left,
Mourn as I view that height I cannot reach,
And sigh those beauties which I cannot tell.

Come,

Come, then, Britannia's voice of modern days!
 Come, and, with generous frankness known to few,
 Assist, while in thy mirror I display,
 And trace the beauties of thy rival's face;
 That men may know the conquest thou hast made
 And view her strength who sank beneath thy arm.
 Not small the vict'ry—heavenly were her charms!
 And tho' she fell, she justly claims a tear.

MORDUTH.

M O R D U T H*,

AN ANTIENT

HEROIC POEM.

IN THREE BOOKS.

BOOK I.

ART thou on the wings of thy speed, O
wind? Dost thou travel with all thy
strength? Come in mildness to the cave of my
rest, O breath of the north! My strength is
with

* The accounts which tradition gives of the author of this poem, are various. Some assert that he was a chief, whose territories lay to the north of the Grampian hills, towards the eastern coast. Others affirm, that he was bard to Morduth, King of the Caledonians. Another party maintain, that he was family-bard to the unfortunate house of Dunairm, whose history he has introduced into the present poem. But, although they differ in their accounts of his station, they all agree that his name was Douthal; and the industry with which his compositions have been handed down, are sufficient to show the veneration which they entertain for his memory.

with the years that have flown: My friends
are with the tenants of the tomb. I sit lonely
in my cave of woe, in the days of my feeble
years. Leave thy wrathful storms behind thee,
when thou rollest over my rocks, thou hasty
blast!

My speed on the hills was once like thine,
O wind! my strength as the rocks of Cruival.
The ghosts of my foes wander on many hills:
The marks of my steel is in many battles. But
thou, perhaps, like me, wilt some time mourn
thy departed strength, and wander with slow
steps on the hills. Thou wilt then in vain en-
deavour to drive thy hundred clouds before
thee. The forest that now bends at thy ap-
proach, will laugh, when thou desirest the
haughty oaks to bow their branchy heads be-
fore thee. Even the feeble heath will scorn
thy strength. Come, then, in friendship to my
gray hairs, O wind; for the days of thy own
feeble years approach.

Lay down the bow, and kindle the oaks,
hunter of Corri; * the course of night is to-
wards

* Corri is one of the many significant terms in the Galic
which the English is incapable of admitting in a transla-
tion.

wards us. The sun trembles in the west. The
 file of his sleep † has three times opened wide
 its gates, and cried, ' Come in all thy flaming
 beauty, O sun !'

The

tion. Concavities of one or two miles in diameter, are
 frequently to be seen in the face of some large ranges of
 mountains. The springs which issue from three sides of
 this concavity, always meet about the center, where the
 junction of so many rivulets forms a little stream, which is
 afterwards joined by other rivulets from both sides, till it
 arrives at the bottom of the mountains from which it col-
 lects the waters. Then the hollow through which the river
 passes, is called a *Glen*. But the face of the hills, to
 which it owes its birth, is called *Corri*.

† The sun was supposed to sleep in Flathinnis; or, *the
 Isle of Peace*, in the western ocean. As nature rejoices or
 grieves according as this celestial body bestows or with-
 holds its smiles; an ambition of which the human mind
 seems, in no age, to be defective, induced the Celts to
 send the ghosts of their departed friends to this imaginary
 paradise. To make *HERE* happy, by reflecting on the
 prospect of *HEREAFTER*, is a consolation at which man-
 kind have eagerly grasped, in all ages and nations. Va-
 rious are the appearances under which the imagination has
 represented this happiness. But, when the most perfect de-
 lineations of it are minutely examined, well may we ex-
 claim at the end, ' 'Tis but to know how little can be
 known.'—Tho' we have, at last, obtained an infal-
 lible

The clouds of night hide their dark heads behind the eastern hills. By times they look forth from their hidden caves, and watch the departure of the broad-faced king of the sky. Put on your wings of speed, ye clouds, and come forth. The ghosts of a hundred heroes prepare a bed for your bright * foe in the Isle of Peace.

Blest

lible system of religion, and have as much communicated to us as was judged proper or necessary for us to know, occasional inquiries into the notions of our ancestors, on so interesting a subject, will not, perhaps, be deemed altogether impertinent. These inquiries, at this distance of time, cannot be expected to be altogether satisfactory. The glimmering light by which they are directed, is only to be gathered from the remains of antient poetry, which consists rather in allusions to, than any descriptions of religion, as the bards never wrote professedly on that subject.

* The sun is frequently called the *Foe of Night* in antient poetry. The joy which the ghosts, in this imaginary isle, were said to express, when he descended from the sky, shewed a great extent of imagination. It was supposed that the ghosts of the most courageous warriors sat next him; but those who had been cowards in their lifetime, were kept at the extremities of the island. We do not, however, hear of any other punishment inflicted on them, than that of being kept at a distance from the sun.

The

Blest be the fair maid of thy love, O hunter;
unerring be the arrow of thy bow ! Thou com-
fortest

The Highlanders, accustomed to hear the bold, lofty, and elegant compositions of their bards on this subject, were not a little astonished, about the beginning of the present century, when one of those popular preachers, who are said to have reformed mankind, attempted to establish a very different hypothesis ; and positively affirmed, in a sermon, that the sun was the place mentioned in scripture, as appointed for the reception of the damned.

When the common people in the north are any ways puzzled about seeming improprieties, in matters of religion, some of their respectable teachers sent them from the south, find a very short, but substantial solution to such difficulties. They sometimes tell these people, that their ignorance, and want of penetration, is the reason which makes it appear so to them. That these matters have been minutely examined by the wise part of mankind, who have all agreed in it ; and that they themselves are the only persons in the world who entertain a doubt of it. That the rest of mankind, in compassion to their ignorance, have raised an immense sum of money, to be applied for the purpose of opening their eyes ; and conclude, with complimenting themselves, as the favourite vessels chosen to put these pious resolutions in execution.

That an immense sum was raised for this laudable purpose, is a fact which every native of that country will acknowledge, with the warmest overflowings of gratitude.

But

fortest me in my tottering age.—But sit thou down in my cave, and let the rocks contend with the wind. I will tell thee of warriors who are now no more; of heroes who sleep within the silent tomb.

Pleasant

But the offended feelings of the more penetrating part of them are justly roused, when they reflect, that this money is applied to purposes very different from those intended by the generous donors.

That the suppression of vice, and promotion of virtue, is the aim of the *Society for propagating Christian Knowledge, &c.* can admit of no doubt. That they have proved themselves destitute of abilities to put their good intention in execution, is an assertion, which, I am sorry to say, is supported by truth. These gentlemen seem to have entertained strange notions of the Highlanders. They imagined that the most ignorant men whom they could collect from the dregs of the people, well enough qualified to establish any system of religion among the mountaineers. Magnifying their own consequence, and entertaining an unsufferable degree of contempt for the intellects of the people they were about to reform, they have rendered themselves ridiculous to the intelligent part of mankind, and injured the cause they meant to advance. The converts to the Roman Catholic persuasion, are becoming every day more numerous. The reason is obvious. Their priests are all men of a liberal education, and generally of extensive knowledge. Men, versed in all the sophistry of argumentation,

Pleasant are the thoughts of former times;
 Sweet the remembrance of the days that have
 fled. Return, ye deeds of my youth, and let
 my soul yet behold the years of my strength.
 Let the battles of other times roll before me;
 and let me view the steel of heroes who have
 been.

Bend

argumentation, will find little difficulty in refuting a doctrine supported by a parcel of weavers, shoemakers, &c. who, being too lazy to work at their own trades, have taken it into their heads to reform a people already wise, acute, and penetrating, far beyond themselves. As these servants of the Society have no knowledge of science or literature, they generally endeavour to swell themselves in the eyes of the populace, by groans, sighs, and other marks of hypocrisy. A species of imposition, and an insult offered to the Author of all religion, for which every man of genuine piety must express the warmest indignation!

If we look back into the history of Scotland for the last two centuries, we will find every passage filled with human miseries, created by a similar set of men, on a similar subject. The people of the low countries are now recovered from their dream. Would it not be an object worthy the attention of the Legislature, to prevent such an infection spreading in the Highlands, by sending men of parts and learning to instruct them?

Bend forward your awful presence from
the clouds of your rest, warriors of old!
ye who raise no more the spear in battles, be
near. Your sons shall hear of your strength;
and a tear will trickle down their cheeks
when they pass by the narrow dwelling of the
mighty.

A tale of other years rushes on my soul. I
remember the deeds of the days that are past.

Gloomy was the night; for the moon hid
her fair face from the storm. The stars lay
asleep among the folds of their dark clouds.
Winds and seas came in haste from other
lands. The battles of rocks and storms were
terrible, when the ghost of Salmor * came
forth from his watery bed in the womb of ocean.
His footsteps were on the frothy wings of the
troubled

* The poems concerning this Salmor are now lost; but
tradition makes frequent mention of him. He was drown-
ed, in passing from the continent of Scotland to his own
house, in one of the Hebrides, on hearing that his wife
was taken prisoner, and his lands laid waste by Tuthmar,
a chief of Norway, whose father Salmor is said to have
killed in battle. A beautiful poem is said to have been
composed by Salmor's bard, on this subject; but the
translator has not been so lucky as to meet with it.

troubled waves. The gathering of the whirlwind was there: The son of the grave rose on the wings of the blast. He stood on Craigduth's clifty brow. The course of the storm was round the trembling of his pointless spear. He leaned forward from his bed of clouds, and his words were heard.

Raise, chiefs of Albin*, raise the spears of your strength. Let the voice of shields be

E

heard,

* Albin, which signifies a *mountainous country*, seems once to have been the name of all the island, as well as Britain, in the Galic. But, after the Saxons had defeated the South-Britons, and become masters of that division, their part received the name of *Saffon*, the latter *x* being neither written nor pronounced in the Galic. Such of the South-Britains as maintained their independency, were honoured with the appellation of *Ualsb*, or *Nobility*, in opposition to the vulgar who submitted to the conquerors; and the northern division, comprehending all Scotland, has ever since been invariably known in the Galic by the name of ALBIN.

To launch forth into the rugged paths of controversy, is beyond the limits or intention of the present notes: But, when the definitions which truth compels the translator to subjoin to these poems, are directly opposite to the assertions of writers of reputation on the same subject, a vindication of them becomes necessary.

The

heard, and the gathering of warriors be seen.
 Not feeble is the arm of the coming foe. The
 rolling

The Rev. Mr Whitaker, in a recent history of the antient Britains, has displayed the knowledge of a man of science, and the liberality of a gentleman, in a manner which is seldom to be met with in the productions of those who professedly write to injure the reputation of an individual, or the antiquity of a people. It is with reluctance, therefore, I proceed to refute the assertions of an author, endowed with many qualifications to command respect. But, since he has ventured to publish as facts, what is directly opposite to this definition, it becomes necessary to examine how far he is countenanced by truth; as it would be dangerous to lay any fact before the public as genuine, while an author of Mr Whitaker's shining abilities stands unconquered in the field to oppose it.

As the Galic is at present little known, and less studied, ignorance concerning any matter wrapped up within the folds of its garment, would very improperly be attributed as a defect to any writer of character in the republic of letters. But, since Mr Whitaker has, of his own accord, started the contest, and plumed himself on an ideal conquest obtained over all the critics that ever wrote concerning that language, to examine his pretensions to merit, on a subject which he himself has chosen, will certainly be considered as no injustice.

Had Mr Whitaker mentioned the matter in words which could admit of any signification but one, his read-

rolling of Lochlin's dark ships is on the restless bosom of the waves.—Rise, sons of Albin, rise,

ers would be apt to suspect their own want of penetration, rather than imagine so great a man capable of writing such absurdities. I shall give the passage at large, as it will, no doubt, astonish every reader acquainted with the antient language of Britain, who has not already perused it.

'The whole body of the Caledonians, however, could never have been, and are not now denominated Albanich. The name of Caledonia, comprising all that peninsula of land which lies to the north of the Friths, the appellation of Alban, or the mountains, could have been given only to the hilly part of the country, in opposition to the levels of the eastern coast, and the plains immediately to the north of *Antoninus's* Vallum. The inhabitants of these, I have already shown to have been denominated Mæatæ, or Lowlanders, by the Britons and Romans, and the inhabitants of the hills only, are denominated Albanich at PRESENT. The tribes of the Caledonian lowlands were denominated Mæatæ formerly, in contradistinction to the nations of the hills. And the clans of the Caledonian mountains are denominated Albanich at present, in opposition to the residents of the lowlands.' *Whitaker's Genuine History of the Britons*, page 270.

The Irish extraction of the Caledonians is a favourite hypothesis of Mr Whitaker. The present extract is an attempt

rise, and let the shields of your fathers meet the approaching foe.

The

attempt to establish it. Conscious, however, that the name of the country and inhabitants were against him, he endeavours to wave objections too stubborn to be conquered, by confining this name to a very inconsiderable part of the Caledonians, the mountaineers, that he might have the pleasure of mortifying the inhabitants of the low countries, by making their progenitors consist of a despicable colony from Ireland, whom he represents as subduing the Caledonians, and becoming masters of their country.

Since Mr Whitaker has thus deprived the most respectable part of the Caledonians of the only name by which they have been distinguished, in their antient language, for ages, far beyond the reach of history, it is to be wished, he had informed us under what denomination to class them for the future, whether with the Saxons or the Welsh; as the inhabitants of Britain have, for many centuries, had no other general distinction in the Galic than Albinich, Ualsh, and Sassonich.

Had Mr Whitaker insisted on what happened in former ages only, references to history might be requisite to refute his assertions. But, since he has brought the subject to the present times, the controversy may be speedily and effectually decided. The reader may, if he pleases, ask any plebeian, who understands the Galic, the signification of *Albinich*; he will readily receive for answer, that it is applied to

all

The departure of the pale-fac'd son of night
 was on the wings of the sudden blast. Oaks
 of strength trembled before the haste of his re-
 tiring steps. The groans of the woods were
 heard,

all the inhabitants of Scotland, comprehending both those
 of the high and low countries. If he thinks his informer
 mistaken, he may put the same question to five hundred ;
 they will all answer in the same words.—What a pity that Mr
 Whitaker had not consulted some of them, and not exposed
 his ignorance of a language, on the radical words of which
 he attempts to establish a groundless hypothesis; and
 from whose significant terms he endeavours to deduce the
 origin of nations.

Who can help regretting, that an author of Mr Whitaker's taste, elegance, extensive knowledge, and acute penetration, should suffer himself to become the dupe of prejudice, so far as to let himself thus be made an easy prey by every little critic, without putting them to the trouble of arranging arguments against him. No wonder that Cæsar and Tacitus have given such imperfect accounts of the Caledonians eighteen hundred years ago, since an antiquarian of Mr Whitaker's penetration, is entirely ignorant of the very name by which they are distinguished at this day.

As the inhabitants of Albin are the principal actors in the subsequent poems, this inquiry into the extent of their territories, became in some degree necessary.

heard, as he rushed on the clouds of his speed through their whistling locks.

Call my heroes from the chace, said the Chief of Albin's chiefs. Kindle my oaks on Drumfina *, that the blaze of many hills may gather my people from their hundred glens.

Such were the words of Morduth †, king of many straths, when his shield spoke the words of alarm. The sons of battle heard,
and

* Of Drum, a height, and Fina, heroes. If we might presume, at this distance of time, to form conjectures concerning the scene of the present poem, we would be apt to place it in the north-east corner of Fife. There is to be seen, at this day, the remains of a fortification on the top of a hill, called *Drumcarro*, three miles west from St Andrew's. The country people, who always entertain gigantic notions of antient heroes, distinguish it at present by the name of the *Giant's Castle*. Though not high, it commands an extensive prospect along the eastern coast, from Lothian to near Aberdeen; and, therefore, a very proper situation for kindling a fire, according to the custom of the Scots, as a beacon to alarm the country, on the appearance of an enemy.

† Mor-duth, great, dark hero.—All the names in the Highlands, and most of the antient ones in the low countries,

and their swords forsook their dark dwellings in the sheath.

Morning shook her gray locks in the east, and bade the storm depart. The sun came forth in mildness from the waves, and his rising beams smiled on the blue steel of many heroes.

Caivglas * came forward with his cloud of strength. Many spears glittered behind Canard. Tommore of the massy shield gathered his warriors; and why should Mordale, the chief of the weighty steel, be last? His steps were foremost to meet the foes of Albin.

Who hath seen Swanar, said Caivglas, of other years?—are his warriors many?—I have met him in battle in the days of my strength; but other warriors now raise the spears of Albin.

Then they shall raise them in vain, said the son of Corvi. Swanar advances with the
strength

countries, are at this day significant in the Galic; as Bal-four, *old town*; Lesly, *the half of the plain*; Somerville, *the man of weighty words*, &c.

* Chaibh-glas, *gray locks*;—Chean-ard, *high-head*;—Tom-more, *great hill*;—Mor-dale, *extended valley*.

strength of thousands. The dazzling beams of the sun sparkle round the gloss of his burnished armour. Tall warriors sink by his sides. Lofty trees seem little as he passeth. The rocks of Tirmore diminish beneath his extended stride. Terrible is the coming of Lochlin's * king! Who of Albin's race shall meet the strength of his arm?

Fly to thy cave of safety with all thy terrors, thou chief of the feeble arm, said Caivglas. Thy little soul trembles at the sound of danger, like the green leaf which shakes on a twig before the wind. Fly thou, like it, from the breath of winter; but here are oaks of strength, who have withstood the wrath of other storms. Has not the north poured all its fury on our land in the days of former years, and have we not met the blast unshaken?—Fly, thou warrior of yesterday, to the dwellings of little men.

Had

* All the northern nations who invaded the Caledonians, were comprised under the general name of Lochlin, in the Galic, comprehending all the different states of Scandinavia. This name seems to have been given them by the Caledonians themselves; as the word, in their language, literally signifies, *The descendants of the ocean.*

Had he, who is but of yesterday, no foes but thee, well might he tremble for the fame of his battles:—But Lochlin's race shall meet his sword warm from thy side. Thy words have already been heard,—son of pride:—shew thy steel.

The spears of the two chiefs rose. Their warriors on either side half unsheathed. Now would the steel of Albin have pierced her own bosom, and fought the battle for Lochlin's race, had not the king, the shield of his people, come forward, and stopped the uplifted spear. He saw, with grief, the strife of the heroes. His frowning eye rolled from chief to chief. He dreaded the fall of his people, and his words were heard.—

Unsheath not the sword, ye sons of ocean, lest the tales of your land say we sank by your strength. Your fathers have often raised the spears in vain. Their tombs are many on our coasts ; but smile, ye sons of the sea, for Albin has unsheathed the sword against herself.

Abashed, the sons of discord shrunk from the wrath of the king, like two dark clouds

F

that

that roll their course to different hills, when the sun looks forth in all his majesty.—The vallies before them are sad, and see the coming of the tear of heaven. Little hills are past unheeded.—Their course is towards the highest mountains, that rear their haughty heads in the wide extended regions of the sky.—So dark, so tremendous, rolled the chiefs their threatening course towards the foe.

✓ X The King came forward with the strength of Albin, like the rock of Tonmore *, when it collects the force of all its clifty brows to meet the boisterous waves of ocean.

Swanar advanced with all his pointed spears. The strength of Lochlin moved like a storm from the north, which slowly rolls its clouds along the hills. No angry wind travels in wrath: No rash blast wanders alone.—The strength of the north blows equal.

The spears of Albin rose high. The words of steel were heard. As the meeting of two great rocks in the bottom of the hollow glen, rolling with fury from the lofty brows of opposite

X * Tonn-more, *great waves.*

posite hills, when the brown hind flies with horror the danger of their course; so bold, so fierce, so terrible, was the meeting of the two hosts. Many foes sank before the strength of Albin. Many more supplied the places of the fallen.

The horror of battle roared along the heath. Mordale strode among the slain. A bloody stream pours from Canard's spear. The soul of each hero was bright; but who could withstand the strength of thousands?

Morduth saw the backward steps of his people, and the kindling rage of his mighty soul awaked. He raised his terrible spear in wrath, and the groans of new-formed ghosts were heard. But his heroes were distant far, and his foes were many. He retired at last to his host, like the angry torrent, when, murmuring, it falls from the shaggy brow of the rock. An hundred times the pride of ocean bids his furious waves climb the rugged height. An hundred times the rock throws them back into the restless deep. The voice of their rage is terrible, as they shake their hoary locks to the wind.

Why

Why doest thou frown in the west, fair haired traveller of the sky? Our foes were not of the feeble. Often have the dark clouds concealed thy own beauty in the day of the storm. But, when thou drivest the wind from thy lands, and pursuest the tempest from thy fields; when the clouds vanish at thy nod, and the whirlwind lies still at thy desire; when thou lookest down in triumph on our land, and shakest the white locks of thy awful majesty, in pride, above our hills; when we behold thee clothed in all thy loveliness, we rejoice in the conquest thou hast made in heaven, and bless thy friendly beams, O Sun!—

But retire to thy heathy bed with smiles, bright monarch of the sky; for we will yet be renowned.

M O R D U T H,

M O R D U T H,

B O O K II.

THRIICE had the dark-haired night
shook her misty wings in the east.
Thrice had the trembling stars attempted to
look forth. Thrice had the sighs of the van-
quished mingled with the wind, when the
ghosts of departed heroes were seen stalking in
wrathful steps on the hills. Meteors rolled
together on the heath. Feeble voices whif-
pered in the clouds. The affrighted host heard
it, and dreaded the frown of their fathers who
never fled.

The king stood on Ardcraig's * brow. An
hundred spears are half erected round. Each
spear supports the grief of a chief. Behind
stood the darkened host, a gloomy cloud ! The
looks of the king were round him to behold
their thoughts, and his words came forth.

Fate

* Ardcraig, *high rock.*

Fate frowns, and the feeble retire from danger. The voice of the storm is heard, and the sons of little men fly to the cottage; but the rock meets the breath of the north, and shakes not. The course of the storm is abroad; but oaks of strength raise their heads regardless of its wrath.

Say, then, chiefs, are we of the sons of little men? Are our spears feeble twigs sprung from Albin's oaks of strength?

The force of many foes rushed from the north in the days of other years. Did our fathers fly before them?—No, warriors! they fled not from the strength of thousands. Their spears rose high: The sons of the sea sank before them. Shall we then fly on the hills of their triumph, where the ghosts of the foe were wont to murmur from the whirlwind as they fled from tomb to tomb?—These gray stones, the marks of other battles, lift their mossy heads in the face of heaven, and seem to say, 'Your fathers fled not.'

The king spoke. The chiefs stood fixed in grief. By times they viewed their spears, and grasped their bossy shields. Swords were half-unsheathed,

unsheathed, and half-formed accents mingled with the wind.

Morcan *, the leader of Aulduth's † warriors, came forward. Thrice he shook the locks of his age. Thrice his spear is dashed against an oak. His eye dropt the tear of woe; his mouth the words of grief.

My name, O king! was not wont to be mentioned with the feeble. I was not accustomed to fly before my foes. Part of my strength has fled with my years; but fear has not yet found room in my withered nerves. The hope of my gray hairs was in the rising fame of my son. His hand, I thought, would raise my tomb. Nor spear, nor tomb, shall ever rise by him. He rushed forward in the battle,

* Mor-chean, *great head*.—This distinction was not altogether so rude as the elegant author of the Annals of Britain affirms, in the etymology of the name of Malcolm Canmore. The idea of loftiness, as well as greatness, is expressed by the original; and, therefore, very properly applied to a man exalted above the common people, whether by stature or station.

† Auld-duth, *black-stream*.

battle, where no friend could aid. The rising of many spears was round him:—He sank in the midst of falling foes.

Peace to the shade of the hero, said the king ! he must not wander alone to the misty dwellings of his fathers ; some chief of Albin must attend. The land of clouds is gloomy. The warrior is a stranger, and alone.

* Ogvan, the son of Corvi, grasped his shield, and shook his spear to the wind.—Shall we rest till morning show her fair face in the east ; or raise the steel among the clouds of night, and lay the foe with the deer of their feast ?

Often, said Canard, did our fathers give the shell of joy ; but when did they spread death round the feast of strangers ?—The mighty are among the race of Lochlin. We too will rejoice in our turn ; or, if we fall, let us not depart, like the dim cloud that travels over the mountains, while the moon is asleep, and the twinkling stars shrink from the presence of the storm. The morning will soon shake her gray locks in the east. The sun will look forth

* Og-bhan, *young fair warrior*.—

forth from the blue fields of his pride, and
 finile on the raising of our steel, while death
 frowns grimly at the point of each spear.

Let heroes who expect their tombs to rise
 by the white-armed daughters of beauty, said
 the bearer of Dunairm's * shield, rest till morn-
 ing; but Moralt shall fall amid the shades of
 night. No tomb of mine shall rise: No tear
 from the lovely shall bathe it. None shall la-
 ment over me, saying, 'Oh my hero!'—
 None shall lament over me, saying, 'Oh my
 son!' † My arrow hath pierced the breast of
 the lovely: My spear is stained with the blood
 of my kindred.

My fathers were the foes of Albin. Their
 spears rose with Lochlin's king. I longed to
 travel upon the waves of ocean. Six warriors
 raised my white sails. The wind came in
 haste from the north: Waves gathered strength
 from the blast. Seas mingled with clouds

G

that

* Dunairm, *the tower of arms.*

† 'They shall not lament for him, saying, ah my
 brother, or ah sister! They shall not lament for him,
 saying, ah lord, or ah his glory! He shall be buried with
 the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates
 of Jerusalem.' Jerem. xxiii. 18.

that hurried along the face of the deep. The high hills of Albin rose on the top of the waves *. The green woods of Sliavan shook their

* What is here translated, *The high hills, &c.* stands in the original Dheirich Albin air braidh-tonn. The Dh in the first word having the sound of y in English; and in the middle of the last, being, according to the genius of the Celtic language, quiescent, is pronounced thus: Yeirich Albin air braitoir; Brai signifying invariably *top*, and toin *waves*.

To pretend to give a definition of the word *Britain* just, and, at the same time, different from all that have already been advanced by so many eminent writers on that subject, would bespeak a degree of arrogance which the Translator would sedulously wish to avoid: But, he has the greatest reason to believe, that the etymology of it cannot, with propriety, be deduced from any other root than *Brai-toin*.

That the language of the Gauls and Britons was the same, we learn from undoubted authority; and, it would be doing material injustice to the intelligent reader, to imagine him capable of supposing this could be any other than the Celtic. As this was undoubtedly the first language spoke on both sides of the English channel, it renders it more than probable, that it is the only one in which the origin of the word *Britain* is to be found.

That Britain was at first peopled from the opposite coast of Gaul, is a rational hypothesis; and accordingly has been

their locks before the bounding of our bark:

The hall of Dunairm was the home of
strangers. The gray haired chief stretched
forth

been adopted by the most eminent historians: That, as Britain was within sight of Gaul, the inhabitants would bestow on it some name before they crossed the channel, is a supposition not altogether improbable. The Celtic language contains no names that are not significant of the external appearance of the objects on which they are bestowed. Ingenuity could certainly suggest no term more significant of the appearance of Britain from France, viewing it over the convexity which the globe forms in the breadth of the channel, than, 'The land on the top of the waves.' The antient poems in the Highlands are, at this day, replete with similar expressions applied to any land viewed over a part of the sea.

That *the top of the waves* is a faithful translation, is asserted with a positive tone; But the arguments advanced, with a view to derive the name of our island from it, are only the children of imagination; and, therefore, left to be crushed or cherished at the mercy of the reader. No attempt, however, hath been made to mislead him, as the Translator does not pretend to support his opinion, either by the testimony of history, or the voice of tradition. It is, notwithstanding, countenanced by the universal custom of the Celtic nations, of never bestowing a name on any object that was not highly significant and characteristic.

This

forth the hand of friendship to receive us. Welcome, said he, are the sons of ocean, when they come in peace. Our deers are many: Our shells are full. The tales of our bards are pleasant; and why should the stranger mourn in our hall?

The feast was spread with mirth, and we blessed the foes of our fathers.

Minvas * shone in the hall of her father, like the first beam of the rising sun, when it smiles on the dewy plains. Many chiefs sought the love of the maid; but she turned her eyes from the mighty, and fixed them on Moralt.

Nor hills, nor warriors were mine. I went to the battle alone. The foes of Lochlin had fallen by my hand; but my fame was not heard.

Go, said the maid; fight the battles of other kings. Gather thy fame in a distant land;
send

This is the only evidence we can reasonably expect, in support of the origin of terms which have made their way to us, from a people destitute of the use of letters, and consequently of any other means of conveyance, than the signification of words.

* Min-bhas, *soft palm*.

send it before thee to Minvas, and she will own thy love.

I went to Erin's * king. Many of his foes fell by my sword. My name was heard in song,

* All the places which lay to the west, were antiently denominated *Era*; as Erin, Ireland; Er-gael, Argyle, signifying the western Celtæ, in opposition to those who inhabited the eastern coast of Scotland.

The Rev. Mr Whitaker gives a very different account of the matter; and claims no small portion of merit from the discoveries he has made, and the victories he has gained over all the critics and historians who have written on this subject. If these claims are properly founded, no apology will be due to the reader for laying them before him.

'Ar-gathel, Iar-gael, or Ar-gyle. This name has puzzled all the critics and historians. But it is nothing more than the IRISH. The Britons being universally called *Gathel*, and *Gael*, such of them as went over into Ireland, Iar-in, or Er-in, must naturally have received the appellation of Iar-gael, Er-gael, Ar-gael, or the Irish Britons; and the appellation remains, to this day, among the Irish, in their customary appellation for their own language, Caelich Eir-inach, or the Irish British.' *Whitaker's Genuine History of the Britons*, p. 287.

Ostentation never raised her giddy head with less reason than in the above extract. It is astonishing how a writer
of

song, and my fame travelled over many seas.
 The daughters of Innis-fail spread their white
 arms

of Mr Whitaker's penetration could attempt to gather laurels in the field of Celtic etymology. Ignorant of every dialect of that language, he deceives himself by the similarity of sound, or by pronouncing letters, which, according to the genius of the language, ought to be quiescent. Laying, thus, the basis of his hypothesis on a false foundation, he proceeds to erect a structure, which even the beautiful manner of his execution cannot rescue from censure; and, he almost compels his intelligent readers to forget that respect which is due to him, as a gentleman of genius and learning.

The name of *Argyle* has never puzzled any critic or historian who understood the language of its inhabitants, as there are not two words in it easier defined than those that compose it, *i. e.* *Era*, *west*; and *Gael*, the general name of the Celtic nations.

The Britons are here said to be universally termed *Gathel* and *Gael*.—As much knowledge in the *Galic* as generally falls to the share of a school-boy, would be sufficient to inform Mr Whitaker, that the names are both the same; that the *th* in the middle or end of words, after a broad vowel, are universally silent; and, although written by some ancient authors, are never pronounced. A thorough knowledge of the fundamental rules of Celtic grammar would have saved Mr Whitaker and his readers

arms before me in vain. When peace smiled
on the land, I returned to the maid of snow.

The

an immense deal of trouble, and rescued the subject from that obscurity into which his ignorance of them has thrown it, by creating several names out of one. The whole argument is founded on a supposition, that the term *Gael* was applicable to no other people than the Britons.

The word *Gael* signifies literally *Whites*, and is the name by which we find the principal inhabitants of Europe, towards the west, first distinguished in ancient history. Accordingly, all the remains of that people, to this day, call themselves *Gael*; as Gaelic-albinach, the language of the Gaels in Albin; Gaelic Erinach, the language of the Gaels in Ireland, and Gaelic-uallsh the language of the Gaels in Wales.

The inhabitants of Britain were never called *Gael* from their country, but from their language. The appellation, therefore, always was, and is, at this day, applied promiscuously to the inhabitants of both islands, who continued to speak the ancient Celtic.

That the Irish call their own language '*Gaelic-erinach*,' is an undisputed truth. But the subsequent definition of it, or '*the Irish British*,' furnishes a glaring instance of the boldness with which this author advances the chimera of his own brain in the face of well attested facts. Does not Mr Whitaker know, that the Galicians in Spain spoke this language? Does he not know that the Gauls in France spoke it? Does not he know that the Irish themselves

The sun lay asleep, and the moon wandered from cloud to cloud, when the hall of Dunairm appeared. From the skirts of a birchen grove the breath of night conveyed to my ears a sound soft as the breath of summer.—‘Go; and, if thou fall, Minvas will bathe thy sweet memory with her tears.’

My soul, that never trembled before, shook with dread and horror. I saw Minvas; and stately was the warrior who stood by her side.

I bent

selves spoke it? Why then pretend to confine it to the Britons?

Ignorance of the Celtic language, which may, in some cases, be held forth as a shield for Mr Whitaker, will not here avail him. A writer far less versant in the voluminous history of antiquity, must have known, that, when Argyle received its name, Gael, or Celtæ, was applied to many nations of Europe. What apology, therefore, shall candour find for an author who could thus flatter his own vanity, and gratify the prejudice of his countrymen, at the expence of truth, and violation of these sacred principles of honour, on which every historian ought to value himself?—But he is not singular in his conduct. The utmost efforts of the mind seem to extend no further than to *propose* well. The *execution* generally compels us to regret each others weakness, and lament that human nature, even in her noblest appearance, is clogged with infirmities.

I bent my bow.—Go, said I to an arrow,
 pierce that breast of falsehood. Let no other
 warrior search for fame to please that heart
 of pride.

The steel entered her white bosom *. Her
 variegated garment is spread on the heath,
 Her long hair is bathed in her blood. Her
 groans are mingled with the sighs of night.

Whence came the meteor of death, cried
 the warrior?—From an arm of strength, I re-
 plied; and raised my spear.

Son of gloomy night, said the astonished
 youth, thy arm is strong because the foe was
 feeble. The spear of the mighty never rose
 before a dark heart like thine. But thy surly

H ghost

* This passage furnishes an instance of northern barba-
 rity, of which nothing similar is found among the Caledo-
 nians. Little credit, however, would be due to the as-
 sertions of the bard, had he brought this warrior into the
 poem under a contemptible character, as he was de-
 scended of the hereditary foes of the Caledonians. But
 the appearance which he makes throughout the piece,
 leaves no room to suspect that the poet was led by any
 such disgraceful partiality. The present is, perhaps, the
 only crime he could commit, for which his subsequent
 conduct would not entitle him to the reader's forgiveness,

ghost shall forthwith depart from its dwelling, and mingle with the sons of the wind, where thy boneless arm shall never raise the steel against the lovely.

Long we fought on the heath. The groans of Minvas were lost in the clash of our steel. The spear of my foe at last gave way, and he fell before me. The moon looked forth from the skirts of a dark cloud, and I beheld my friend, the brother of Minvas, in his blood.

And art thou fallen, my brother, said the faltering voice of the maid; and shall thy father never behold thy return from the chace? —Oh, Moralt! on what distant land does thy spear rise against the mighty?—No brother of mine shall now call thee from the fields of thy fame. But thou wilt some time return, my hero, and raise the tomb of Minvas near the groves of our former loves.—

I drew the steel from the breast of the lovely. My tears mingled with the red stream from her bosom. She opened her faint eyes, and beheld her Moralt's hands bathed in her blood.—She shrieked herself into a ghost. I strove to grasp it in my arms; but it fled with
horror

horror from my embrace, and rose on a beam of the moon.

Four stones mark the dwelling of the hero:
Near it rose the tomb of the lovely. The virgins often give the tear of pity as they pass:
The tenants of the bush sing their songs of woe. All night I sit, and listen to the wind.
Dark clouds frown on me as they roll over my head. The children of the air shun me with horror.

The chief of Dunairm mourns lonely in his hall. Many tears he sheds for the fallen. By times he feels his childrens tomb. The passing blast bears on its wings his voice of woe to distant lands. He lifts his spear no more:
—But I lift his spear. I lift it against my father's house. The son of Dunairm fell by my hand; but the foes which ought to fall by him, shall also come down. Minvas fell before the moon. Before the moon shall I meet her father's foes. I will meet them, O king; but I will not return. I will depart like the angry storm which has long poured its frosty venom on the plains. The fairest lily of the field perished before it; The vegetable race sink by its wrath.

wrath. The fallen stag lies at the bottom of the rock. The children of the wing are mute. The leafy garment has fled from the blasted oak: The forest shakes its scattered locks in the angry face of heaven. The peasant shuns its wrath near the gleam of his oaks. But the father of kindness looks forth at noon on the mourning plains with pity. He displays the bright locks of his awful beauty. The foe of nature flies from his strength. The hills shake the snow from their heathy locks, and smile at his departure.

Sit thou on the heath till morning, leader of chiefs, and I shall fall alone in the midst of thy foes; lest it be said, 'The foe of the lovely is among us, we shall not prosper.'

Mournful is thy tale, Moralt; said the king; but thou must not fall alone.—Albin's sons will never sleep on the heath, while strangers fight her battles. Thou art at a beam of fire in the day of danger; but raise not, Moralt, the steel against thy friends. The mighty must fall at last. The frowns of winter pursue the footsteps of the smiling summer.—Minvas was a sun-beam in the season of her loveliness.

Few

Few could meet the son of Dunairm in the days of his wrath. Not unmarked are their dwelling among the tenants of the grave; nor unheard their fame in the breath of song. But the spear of thy fathers, Moralt, mourns in thy hand. The generous steel is ashamed to reek with the blood of Lochlin.

It is the spear of Dunairm's chief, said Moralt, that reeks with the blood of his foes:— Mine shall never more rise in battle. It lies buried * in the tomb of the lovely, beneath the tree of the rustling leaf. Strong was the arm which ought to wield this spear; but he defends Minvas from the frowns of fury ghosts in the land of clouds †. And shall the foe triumph

* It was a custom among the antient Celts, to bury or destroy every weapon which had been used in the commission of any crime or unlucky accident; as it was imagined, that the ghosts of the injured were endowed with power to render every effort of such weapons fruitless in all succeeding contests. We do not, however, hear of any desire of revenge being entertained by the ghosts of those who had been killed in fair combat; for such did not consider themselves as injured.

† Some have been led to conclude, from this passage, that the antients were of opinion, that the ghosts of the departed

triumph over his father in the days of his feeble years?—No, O King ! they shall never insult his gray hairs while I can wield this spear.

Long mayest thou wield it in renown, O hero ! said Canard ; but hearken to the woes of others. I too might mourn the fall of the lovely ; but sighs call not forth the tenants of the tomb.

Graceful on the hills was Culalin *, the maid of the hand of snow. Her dark hair rose on the

departed remained in a state of hostility with each other. —The words, I believe, will admit of another explanation. The idea of the young warrior's falling in defence of his sister, ran so strong in the mind of Moralt, that a disordered imagination might represent him as still employed in that office after death ; and that the bard has, perhaps, given the real words of the distracted hero, and not the received opinion of the antients, who seem to have entertained a milder notion of a future state, than to make it a theatre for a repetition of crimes, or a scene for the decision of future contests. This opinion would be clogged with one material difficulty. What would become of the remains of those ghosts who might fall in these imaginary wars?

* Cul-alin, of *cul*, a poetical name for a lady's fine locks ; and *alin*, graceful.—The name of Alan, or Allen, in Scotland and Ireland, is from the same root.

the wind like the raven's wing. The heaving of her white breast was as the downy bosom of the swan, when the soft waves meet it in gladness. The beauty of each virgin vanished when the daughter of Sonner appeared. Graceful was the mother of my sons, and gladness shone in my hall when her soft voice joined the harp.

Guigan, the daughter of Ainer, had tasted my secret embrace before I saw Culalin, and she turned the red eye of envy on the pride of women. She came to Culalin in the season of her solitude, and spoke the words of deceit.

Pleasant are the smiles of the mid-day sun, Culalin ! cool the shade beneath the birchen boughs. The hunters are distant far. The sea has borne her waves to other lands, and left our rocks to raise their dark heads before the kindly breeze. Come, daughter of Sonner, and taste the sweets of noon.

They wandered through the forest. A tall rock within the verge of ocean's bed, affords a grateful shade. Sleep shut the eyes of Culalin. Guigan plet her long hair with thongs, and fixed them to the cliffy rock. Her hands
of

of snow are bound: Her feet are tied to a stone. The maid of the gloomy soul saw the coming of the flood. She rejoiced in the blackness of her deeds, and fled.

Ocean came with all his tumbling waves, Culalin startled at the sound.—Where art thou, my friend? Save me, Guigan, from the hostile flood.—

The rocks answered in pity to her groans; Sighs issued from each hollow cave. But soon shall ye cease to mourn for my love, ye sons of the rock! Another wave, and she lies peaceful beneath the stream. The retiring flood shall leave her as food for the ravenous children of the sea.

The strength of thy brother's arm, Guigan, though he was my best, my dearest friend, was no shield to thee. Alas! the hero fell before my sword. He who had saved my life in battle, died by my hand. Thou also sleepest near him, cruel maid, and thy ghost often frowns on me in the season of dreams.

But thou, Culalin, of the raven locks! pleasant art thou in thy loveliness, as thou smilest on the couch of my slumbers. No furling looks

are thine. No traveller shuns thy dwelling *
in the season of the moon. Often doest thou
raise thy shrill voice on thy rocks, and warn the
mariner of the coming storm †. He hears the
unerring sound, and retires within the peace-
ful bosom of the creek. In safety he views
the

* It was only the ghosts of those who had been guilty
of some crime in their lifetime, that were supposed to wan-
der and attack the nightly traveller. The punishment of
such crimes was thought to consist in wandering near their
graves, till they met with one whom they fought, and
compelled to make restitution to the persons or their de-
scendants, whom they had injured in their lifetime; after
which, it was thought they were permitted to sleep in
peace.—This notion, if not more rational, was at least
more agreeable to the minds of men, than those of a purer
religion.

† Storms frequently rage with great fury at sea, while
it is perfectly calm on the land, before the arrival of the
winds which occasion them. These violent agitations in
the ocean, cause the waves to roar with such fury on the
rocks, that they are heard at the distance of several miles.
Experience has taught the inhabitants on the coast to know,
by this noise, that the storm is coming, some time before
it arrives. The antients were of opinion, that this was
occasioned by the ghosts of those who had been drowned,
who were considered as monitors to warn men of ap-
proaching danger.

the conflict of the waves, and blesses the friendly found of thy rocks, thou watcher of the nightly storms!

Thus have I slain my friend, Moralt; yet my spear rises with success against the foe.—The lovely rise but to fall: The mighty gather strength but to sink.

Canard said, and his mournful words ceased.—Silent and gloomy sat the listening host. Sighs broke forth at the close of the tale of woe. The forest ceased to wave its dark head: The short-limbed heath stood still. Clouds were fixed in the face of heaven. No rocks contended with the blast. Peace was proclaimed among the vegetable race; for the wind ceased to travel *.

What

* This is supposed to be the situation of surrounding objects, while the two foregoing episodes were relating, though not described till now.

Callum Ruadh, a bard still alive in the Highlands, has given a similar description of the attention paid to ancient bards during the rehearsal of their pieces. I have endeavoured to atone, as far as I could, for the injury it has suffered in the translation, by throwing the passage into rhyme.

When

M O R D U T H.

71

What faint beam, with its half formed smile,
gladens the cheek of the east? The moon is
asleep in her heathy bed, and the sun is not
yet

When battles ceas'd, and warriors sheath'd the sword,
Bards join'd the circle round the burning ourd.
The deeds of heroes then employ'd the song:
Attentive were the old, and mute the young.
The sons of discord ceas'd to search for blood;
And life-inspiring casks half empty stood.
Then Beauty's daughters got no half-stol'n glance,
And maids in rich attire forgot the dance.
The sons of mirth neglect'd to form the ring,
And the bow ceas'd to cross the trembling string.
The finny tribe stood list'ning in the flood,
And silence sway'd her sceptre o'er the wood.
The foe of deers lean'd on the fire of death,
And the roe-buck in safety cropt the heath.
The welcome theme brought forth the pleasing dew,
When every chief receiv'd what praise was due.
Woe had not then engaged each melting tear;
For pleasing admiration got her share.
The love of valour fir'd each warrior's breast:
Proud of his chieftain's feats, he rear'd his crest.
The fires reflected on their former days;
The sons were eager to deserve such praise.
Joy sparkled in the face which age made pale;
Each bless'd the mouth that told the welcome tale.

yet prepared to step forth in the brightness of his beauty.—It is Minvas, the maid of the bloody bosom, coming with her hundred meteors to light Moralt, the hero of other lands, the bearer of her father's shield, to the fields of death.

In wrath the virgin comes not to her friends. She pursues the gloom of night from our mountains. The morning star trembles in her hand. She comes like the first beam which the sun sends forth to proclaim his approach before he leaves his bed of rest in the east.

Why dost thou fly from us in haste, maid of the mild aspect?—But thou hast left morning on our hills; and thy dim form has disappeared, like a cloud of mist on the lake, which vanishes before the face of the fire of brightness.

M O R D U T H,

M O R D U T H,

B O O K III.

F AINT beams smiled in the east. Gloomy night fled on her wings of speed. The twinkling stars retired to other lands; and the sun prepared to raise his fair head, when a bard appeared on the heath with his song of pride.

Swanar, the chief of an hundred chiefs: He that is strong as a rock in the sea, as a hill on the land, sends his terrible song to the sons of the mountains.

His eagles are on their wings. His hawks, the followers of his spear, are round him. His ravens have winged their journey round his ships, over many seas. The devouring tribes ask for food. Does the chief of this land grant them his warriors for their feast; or, does he bend before the mighty, and offer them

them his deer?—Speak, ye who fly in battle; for many deaths are in the points of Lochlin's spears.

The words of Swanar are great, bard of the hoary locks! His words are great, because his foes are few. But, sit thou here, and taste the shell of friendship, son of songs; and, when thou returnest to Lochlin's king, tell him that the ravenous sons of the wing have but followed their food over many seas*. Bid him advance with his thousands. Tell him that our arms are strong, and that our souls are bright.

The bard heard the words of the king, and departed in the pride of his haughty steps. He talked of ghosts as he went, because he foresaw the fall of many.

As the angry storm from the north gathers all its winds, and rains, and clouds, when it prepares

* When any bird of prey was seen sitting on the mast of a ship, it was considered as a very bad omen. It was imagined they were endowed with the gift of foreknowledge, by which they followed ships for some time before they were wrecked. The Highlanders, to this day, consider any vessel on which they are seen, as doomed to destruction.

prepares to rush along the plains and pour its fury on the mountains; so gathered Swanar the warriors of his land. Their shields were like the dark clouds of night: Their faces like the stars looking forth by times from their fable skirts.

The force of Albin advanced like a ridge of mighty waves, whose strength is increased by the hostile breath of many blasts. Above is the course of the storm. The broad-faced moon looks down by times. The mariner hears the hideous sound with horror. He trusts in the strength of his bark, and prepares to meet the danger which he cannot shun.

O hunter of Corri! how shall I describe the deeds of our arms?—Thou hast seen Morcraig. It rears its head aloft, and drags the clouds from heaven to clothe its shaggy brows. A mighty torrent tumbles from its top. Its downward journey is an hundred times the length of the tallest warrior that ever raised the massy shield.—Thou hast seen the contest between the flood and the rocks below;—but thou never didst,—hunter of Corri! thou never shall see strife like ours.

As

As the feeble twig bends before the storm,
when angry ghouls contend in the sky; so bent
the race of Lochlin before the king of Albin.
Swanar saw his coming, and thrice he shook
his spear.

But thou shakest it in vain, son of the
sea. Albin's chief is a rock which laughs at
the storm. The strongest waves shrink with
terror from its angry brows.

But I never shrunk with terror, said the
king of the north. My arm is strong as an
hundred storms. Rocks, woods, and moun-
tains, oppose not me. Have not I defeated the
force of the ocean?—Stormy seas spread them-
selves round my coasts, and cry with all their
threatening waves, 'Thou shalt go no further.'
But ye cry in vain, ye haughty seas! Have
not I defeated your strength; and shall the king
of this land stand before me?

Such were the words of the two chiefs; but,
when they raised their terrible spears, the
earth shook around, trees fell torn from
their roots. Rocks groaned beneath their feet,
and,

and, forsaking their beds of rest, rolled away with terror.

Many swords rose around: Many arrows fled from the yew. Many warriors stood at a distance, and viewed the strife of the two kings. But the shield of Swanar sank, and his people trembled. The spear of Morduth rose to end the strife; but the thoughts of the valiant darted on his soul, and he spared the shieldless breast.

Moralt was forward in the bloody contest. A ghost ascends from each stroke of the hero. Distant stood a chief of Lochlin, tall as a tree by the stream. The sons of Albin fall back from his shield, as the waves from a rock.

So stands the oak of many years. The course of the storm is abroad; but thy head, daughter of strength and beauty, is exalted, and thou regardest not the wrath of the blast. Safety is behind thee; and the hunter shuns the storm near thy stately trunk. Thou art his shield from the violence of its rage.—So stood the feeble behind the shield of the chief*.

K

Moralt

* To do justice to the merits of an opponent, appears to

Moralt raised his spear against the mighty son of the sea. The meeting of the two heroes was terrible. Rocks answered to the groans of their steel. The torn heath fled from the struggling of their footsteps: Trees fell before the strife of their spears. The sons of little men saw it, and were afraid.

Long the heroes fought, and long the admiring hosts beheld the gleam of their steel. But both sank together on the heath, and the bloody stream was from both their sides, when Moralt spoke:

I am low, warrior!—my spear shall no more meet the shield of the mighty: My sword shall no more glitter in the strife of heroes.—I have yet one brother, Solva of the massy shield. He pursues the deer on the banks of Bawnar.—If thou wishest to fall by the mighty, meet him, and thy fame will be great in song.—

And

Be one of the highest triumphs which human nature can boast of obtaining over that narrowness of mind, which the cultivation of modern politeness seems but to cherish. Nature, however, rears her head with dignity, and claims several honours of this kind due to her children. But these most frequently occur among a people whom the haughtiness of science has termed *Barbarians*.

And have I raised the steel against thee, O Moralt!—Hath my hand laid the son of my father low?—Thou who taught me to wield the spear!—But never more will I wield it.—Reach me thy hand of friendship;—I will grasp it to my bosom. We will travel together to the dwellings of our fathers.—One cloud will be our bed in the land of ghosts.

The mournful host heard the words of Solva. The race of Lochlin fled to their dark ships.—Morduth dropt a tear over the heroes, and bade the battle cease.—The huge stone rose above the mighty. Near it is the rustling of an aged oak. The whirlwind stops betimes on its boughs: The meteors of night dance round it.—The traveller shuns it in the season of stars: With horror he shuns the unfrequented path.—Two ghosts are its guard; and nought but the roaring storm is permitted to visit the tombs of the heroes *

* This is all that the Translator could collect of the admired and well known poem of Morduth. Several old persons remember to have heard other episodes, which are now lost. Where these were introduced, cannot now be ascertained. In the places where it is here divided into books, it is customary for the Bards, or others who recite it, to pause, take snuff, and make remarks.

T H E

CHIEF OF SCARLAW.

LONG have I followed the footsteps of the stag on the hills of Fuarven. Often has the summer sun returned from his southern journey; and, with the animating strength of his kindly beams, called forth the flowery offspring of the vale. These, for a while, have waved their golden locks, and smiled upon their nodding stalks: But they vanished before the breath of the north; and their children have afterwards sprung up, and filled their places.

Chiefs of old! ye have also fallen: But your children have not filled your places *. Many years have been mine. I behold no companions

* Complaints of this nature have been pronounced with great severity in all ages, against the rising generation. As

companions of my youth, but the rocks and
the woods. Five chiefs have arisen in my days,
and

age and infirmities enfeeble and contract the powers of the
body, they are generally productive of similar effects upon
the mind. Old men are liable to be biassed by groundless
prejudices and ungenerous sentiments. They affect to
despise the world, because they can no longer enjoy it;
and are apt, upon that account, to display their ill nature
and chagrin on every thing around them. They seldom
fail to draw partial comparisons between the companions
of their juvenile years, and the youths that surround them
in their decline of life.

Thus Ossian represents those that immediately followed
the Fingalian race, as *little men*. Morguth, who succeed-
ed Ossian, tells us, that, in the days of his gray hairs, the
feeble tried in vain to raise the spears of their mighty fa-
thers; and the same strain has been sung by almost every
bard to our own days.

These poems were handed down with great care to suc-
ceeding ages, who did not presume to call in question the
veracity of what was advanced by their favourite bards,
but understood every word in a literal sense.

The human mind, eager of prying into the obscurity of
former ages, and always creating difficulties it cannot sur-
mount, began to form gigantic notions of the heroes of
these poems. All the bards agreed, that mankind was
degenerating, with great rapidity, from the strength and
stature

and sunk into the grave in the winter of life. They held the shield against the foe, and spread the feast before the stranger. The ghosts of their enemies fled from their swords in the day of battle.—The heroes lie in Killeusan: Their fame is in the song of bards.

Little Gruiman of the furly brow came afterwards. He fled in the time of danger; and sank beneath the arm of a feeble foe. He was laid under the stone, with the dry burial of the little soul.—No virgin of disordered locks was seen near his tomb *.

Sons

stature of the antients. The imagination at last, shaking off the fetters of reason, and overleaping the bounds of probability, looked back, at full liberty, on the stature of their ancestors, and magnified every generation successively, till it presented the mind with the idea of that monster called a *Giant*.

The bards cherished these notions, which the vulgar swallowed with a voracious appetite, and satiated their hearers with a *quantum sufficit* of the marvellous, as they could now magnify the strength, stature, and actions of their heroes *ad infinitum*. But these magazines of bombast were of short duration, as the best bards of all ages have always expressed a hearty contempt for this species of composition.

* It is with pleasure we read such passages in ancient poetry, as represent the ladies the patrons of virtue.

Sons of the few years, ye that be but of yesterday ! the strength that was mine is yours. Lend me the arm of your youth.—Carry me to the towering top of Benmore, that I may view the hills that wave their heath-brown locks round the strath of Fingal *, the warrior of other days.

O

It has been remarked of great poets, That they are very sparing of general encomiums on the fair-sex; and the present compliment seems to come undesignedly. Their contemptuous neglect of a pusillanimous chief, is here mentioned, with a view to darken his character, not to illuminate theirs. But the eye of penetration may look a little further, and view them in their genuine colours, punishing vice with their frowns, and rewarding virtue with their smiles.

Encouraged by the silence of some antient poets, certain modern ones have presumed to pronounce general censures upon the sex. But, had these gentlemen given us their compositions with as little reserve as the present bard seems to have done, and presented the image of their own breast with equal ingenuity, there is great reason to think, that several passages similar to this, would appear against them in their writings. No poet of reputation, however, has ventured to deviate from nature, so far as to make the soft eye of beauty smile on a despicable character among the males.

* Fingal, *the Celtic hero*. The word *Gael*, (the Celtic of the

O Ossian, king of songs! thou who drew
the tear from the eye: Thou who brought
the

the Roman authors), signifies literally *Whites*, and was probably once the universal appellation of all the Europeans, in opposition to the *Blacks* of the warmer climates. All the remnants of that once great people, call themselves *Gael*, in whatever country they are scattered. The word *White*, and their own name *Gael*, are both written and pronounced the same at this day.

The Rev. Mr Whitaker has placed his opinion on this subject, in direct opposition to all the Celtæ themselves; and asserts, that it is 'a designation too effeminate for the bold and ferocious Celtæ.' Whatever effeminate notions that gentleman may have formed of the *white* part of mankind, it is most certain, that all the Celtæ had the misfortune to be of that colour; and, therefore, truth compelled them to adopt the name of *Whites*, whatever unfavourable opinions antiquaries may form of their valour from it. If the reader has any desire to see etymology in the most abject state of dejection to which pride and rashness ever reduced her, he may consult Mr Whitaker's definition of the word *Gael*, page 122. The passage is too long for insertion, and, may I be permitted to add, too feeble for opposition. After producing the names of several tribes among the antient Britons, he tell us, that they all signified *Woodlanders*: That *Coil* is the same with *Gathel*, which, he says, signifies a wood among the Highlanders and Irish at present.—The assertion, however, is

not

the foe to the ground!—Royal mourner of
 Selma's race! where shall I search for thy
 tomb? The sons of negligence have suffered
 the waving heath to cover it.—The hearer of
 tales round the burning ourd meets thy words;
 and he melts before them.—The course of
 the storm is abroad; but thy tomb it meets
 not. The voice of its rage is loud amongst
 the projecting cliffs: But thy narrow dwelling,
 O king of bards! it passes over in silence. No
 huge stone rears its lofty head there, to com-
 pel the flying winds to stop their rapid jour-
 ney, and, with murmuring accents, salute the
 mighty that lie below.—But roll on, voice of
 the north! The fame of Ossian regards thee
 not:—Thyself art but for a season. Tho' the
 feeble branches of the wood bend before thee,
 and the waving heath kneels at thy approach,
 when thou art gone, they erect their heads,
 and forget thy strength.—But the strength of

L

Ossian's

not true; and every subsequent argument deduced from
 it, is totally destitute of support. There are not two
 words in the antient language of Britain, more different in
 the orthography, sound, and signification, than *Coil*, a
 wood; and *Gathel*, the same as Gael, the universal name
 of the Celtic nations.

Offian's song shall never be forgot, while the oaks
of Albin blaze before the tenants of her glens.

Thy head, Gruimore, contends not with
little hills. Lofty mountains rise by thy side;
but they sink before thee. The hunter on the
top points to the stormy dwelling of the king
of the ocean *, whose wing of strength fought
the battles of Albin, when her sons were weak.
The clouds of heaven salute thee as they pass:
The dreams of thy sons are many in the season
of sleep. The music of thy woods proclaims
the welcome of the rising sun, ere he leaves
his watery bed in the eastern ocean. The stag
starts at the sound; and his mate is absent.
He pants for the safety of her he beholds not.
—Stare not so wildly, son of the branchy fore-
head. The partner of thy joy crops the flowery
food in yon hollow glen, along the border of
the silver stream: The wanton steps of her
lovely fawn are round her.

Ye hills of the heathy locks, on whose slop-
ping sides I have passed the days of my youth,
when my steps were swift in the chace: Let

* The whale poetically called so.—This refers to an
episode in a great work, most of which is in the Transla-
tor's hands, but is excluded from the present volume, on
account of its length.

me behold you once more, while my words are heard, before the child of my grandson say, 'The breath of the bard is fled.'—Where is the music that is sweeter than that of thy winged inhabitants? Where is the wind that is fleetest than thy fags?—Often have I pursued the sons of swiftness: But the feeble who fell behind, and she who staid to protect her young, never fell by my hand. Be kind then to me, ye children of youth; for I fall behind in the chase. No steps of speed are mine: My trembling joints shake as I move. I fill no more the footsteps of the hound!

O ye, who have seen the battles of my youth! when the dead were behind, and the flying foes of Albin before me, shake your heads in pity to the weakness of my arm!—But ye behold it not, warriors of other days! ye are in the land of ghosts. Ye retire to the tomb when the watchful cock proclaims the approach of day*.

Sons

* This opinion is not confined to the antient's alone. The Highlanders, at this day, inform us, with great solemnity, that the ghosts of the deceased wander from sunset

Sons of little deeds, ye who have never been in the strife of heroes, hearken to a tale of former years; and learn to unsheath the sword when the ships of Lochlin appear.

The Chief of Scarlaw pursued his deer far distant from Gruimore, on the hills of Ard-craig, near the tumbling of the waves. His sons, who followed him in the chase, were ten. The oaks lay ready for the flint; and the panting of the hounds was round the falling stag, when Dalav spoke.—

A

set till the cock crows; but the most dangerous time of encountering them is about mid-night. These nightly champions, however, were of great service to mankind in several respects; for, it was confidently asserted, that the ghost would be revenged on any person who had defrauded him or his posterity of their property.

These ghosts were once a strong bar against injustice: but, as the commission of crimes became more frequent, new schemes were invented to screen the guilty. After the introduction of Christianity, it was suggested to the populace, that, if they would draw a circle round them on the appearance of a ghost, in name of the Trinity, &c. the ghost durst never enter that line of circunvallation. Accordingly, this method of carrying on war against the pious inhabitants of the air, is now practised with great success.

A sail raises her head above the restless waves of ocean. The wrath of the storm is fierce, but she regards it not. Daughter of beauty, strength, and speed! come to the woods of Scarlaw. The warriors of thy dark bosom shall taste the joys of our hall, and carry our fame to a distant land, where the friends of Albin will be many.—Ashian! strike not yet the flint: Delay the feast until the strangers arrive.

Nor feast shall they taste, nor fame carry, said the chief. Let every son of mine grasp his shield. I see death on our coast; but he shall taste the blood of strangers.—My sons may fall; but their fame shall survive them.

Chief of the open door *, said Dalav, such were not wont to be thy words, when the stranger came to Scarlaw's hall. Often have
the

* This refers to a species of hospitality observed at this day, by the common people, in the Highlands. If the severity of the weather compels them to shut their doors, they are sure to set them open when they sit down to meat, lest a traveller, by seeing the door shut, might be induced to pass by, and thereby deprive them of the pleasure which they always enjoy in entertaining a stranger. A man who sits down to feast with his door shut, is considered as a disgrace to the clan to whom he belongs.

the fingers of dispatch spread the feast at his approach *. His seat was next thee, near the flame of the oaks; and the joy of thy soul was great, when he spoke the tales of other lands. Why then bespeak death to meet the sons of the waves?

Son of my youth, said the chief, these are Lochlin's sons, who never feast in the hall of strangers. Their joy is in the fall of Albin's race.

Then no joy shall be theirs, replied the youth of the rising soul. The sword of Albin is not wielded by a feeble arm.—Shall I go, and inquire their numbers, that warriors may prepare to meet them †?

Yes,

* When a traveller was seen coming towards a house, victuals were provided for him by the time he arrived. The large ranges of mountains which sometimes separate the inhabited valleys from each other, rendered such a piece of expedition very often necessary. But, when the guest came abruptly, he was under a necessity of putting up with what was at hand. Hence came the well known invitation of *taking bread and cheese till better meat was ready*.

† The Caledonians always considered it disgraceful to meet their enemies with a superior number, till the conduct of their invaders taught them the contrary.

Yes, my son, thou shalt go; but let thy people be near thee, lest many spears rise against one, and the joy of thy father cease.

* Scalán, the son of Shearhuil, opened his mouth; and the words of the little soul came forth.

If in haste we get behind the rocks of Scritán, we may sink the spear of death in the breast of every warrior, as he climbs the cliffs. Then Lochlin's race shall fall; and no danger be near the sons of Albin.

Lover of days, said the chief, the mighty fight not thus their battles. We seek not for safety, but for Albin's foes; and we will meet them when their arm is strongest. Let us go to the hall of arms, and call forth every warrior with his sword of battle, that the sons of Albin may be strong behind the shields of their fathers.

I was then with Benguth, Scarlaw's bard. The fame of his song brought me from Gruimore. My joy was great when I heard the sound of arms.

Son

* Scalán, *shadow*. Shear-huil, *squint-eyed*.

Son of the song, said Scarlaw's chief, Lochlin's race is near. One ship is seen, and she is not alone. Go to the banks of Bluchoil: Meet them; and speak the words of Albin when her foes approach †.

Benguth

† These, in general, contained an inquiry, whether they came as friends or foes. This practice came almost to our own days. The unfortunate M'Donald of Glenco, put the same question to the commander of the party sent by King William to massacre an innocent people. The officer answered, that they came as friends. Accordingly they were treated with all the demonstrations of kindness and civility which assiduity could suggest, or hospitality bestow, for several days. But this party afterwards, in the dead of night, pierced with their daggers, those hearts, on whose generosity they had feasted so long; and murdered the chief, with seventy of his people; without giving them the smallest opportunity of drawing a weapon in their own defence.

When the Highlanders were a little recovered from the consternation into which this piece of treachery had thrown them, the bards poured forth their tears in elegies for their murdered friends. But they appear to have lost part of their former elegance on this occasion. The subject was entirely new. Their antient poetry contained nothing similar to it; and their language could furnish them with no epithets capable to express the baseness of the assassins.

But

Benguth went to meet the foe ;—He went,
and the locks of age were his shield.

Sons of the distant land, ye are welcome to
Albin's coast.—Come ye to empty the shell at
the feast of friendship, to rejoice with the race
of Albin round the burning oaks, to taste the
joys of the hall of warriors, and pursue the
footsteps of the stag with the sons of the chase?
—Or does the forward point of the spear raise
the arms of the mighty against you? Speak,
warriors ; the swords of Albin are many.—

And let them be strong too, said a chief of
Lochlin, what then?—Thy words, son of age,
terrify not us. We have met the breath of
the storm, when it was louder than thine ; yet
were we not afraid. Go to Scarlaw's gray-
haired chief. Tell him, that his ghost must
attend this night at the tomb of Lochlin's
king, whom he slew in his youth. Bid him
come forth with his shield of strength. Tell

M

him,

But the period is too recent, and the characters alluded
to, too well known, to admit of a translation of these
poems, without giving offence to individuals, and recal-
ling events, which it is the business of humanity to bury in
oblivion.

him, that the swords which await him are not in the hands of the feeble.

Benguth stroaked his beard.—He shook his hoary head; and returned to the hall of Scarlaw,

Come they to mourn at the tombs of their fathers; or, does their forward spear call us to battle?

To mourn they come not, O chief! Their words are big with the death of many.—

Then of themselves be that many, Benguth.—The sons of Albin will meet them, as the rock meets the breath of the eastern storm, when the furious waves tumble in disorder behind it.

Flaian, youngest son of mine, be thou near the shield of thy father, lest the sword of strength oppose thee, and thou fall before the weight of thy arm be known.—Dalav, son of my youth, I appoint no place for thee. Pursue danger: Thy arm can meet it. If a shield of Albin sink, search for him who brought it down. His fall will raise thy fame. Let the safety of my people be thy care.—Raspan, Ogier, and Bawn, ye are young, my sons:

Few

Few battles have rolled before you. Be near me, and observe my sword bytimes; for I have fought beside the warriors of former days.

We moved behind the steps of the chief.—Lochlin's army approached: We met on Ro-van heath. Scarlaw struck his echoing shield. Rattling spears rose around. Lochlin's sons sustained the shock.—Shield met sword, and sword met shield: The voice of the steel returned from the distant rocks. The deeds of the mighty pointed out the chief to Lochlin's race: Shields of strength met his spear. His steps were forward in the battle: But on either side Albin's sons fell back; for the chief was surrounded by the arms of youth.

Dalav saw the marks of his father's forward spear. I fought near the youth. I heard the secret groans of his soul, as he mourned his slow steps in battle. Son of Gruimore, said he, the chief is alone: His foes are many; and no arm of strength is near. Go, be thou the shield of his back, lest the coward spear come behind, and the fame of Albin cease.

I went

I went to aid the chief; but who can speak the strength of his arm! The meteors of death were in the gleam of his steel. Foes sank before him: Ghosts rose behind. His steps were in the midst of bloody streams: The heath of Roan was the bed of many. Near him was the raising of Flalan's spear. Strong was the shield which opposed the fair-haired youth: The efforts of his few years against it were fruitless. His steel returned from the strength of Lochlin's warrior, like the falling drop that is dashed from the mighty rock, when its lofty cliffs are at war with the reigning blast. Its sudden journey is downwards. The earth is its tomb; and it shall no more rise on the wings of other storms.

Scarlaw saw the fall of his son: The strength of many rushed to his sword. The foe trembled at the raising of his steel. Swanvil *, the hero of other lands, held the shield to oppose it. Terrible was the meeting of the two chiefs! Earth rolled from the wreck of their footsteps:

Rocks

* This Swanvil appears to have been a great warrior. He makes a fine appearance in the poem which immediately follows this:

Rocks shook with the strength of their struggling. Trees forsook their roots, and hurried down before the course of their strife. Warriors saw it; and their spears ceased to rise.—Thy arm was strong, O Swanvil! and thy soul was bright; but who could withstand the might of Scarlaw?—[The son of the distant land sank before it.

Who is he that is foremost on the south brow of the battle? His wings of steel are spread like the eagle, when she grasps the rolling cloud in her feathered bosom. The foe bends beneath his shield as the heath bends before the whirlwind, when the fold of the cloud is the bed of a hundred ghosts.—Who should it be, but Dowran from Morcraig's woody streams? The spear of his father is in his hand: Below is the bed of the mighty. Quick are the steps of the hero amongst the foe! He spares the feeble as he goes. Now he meets a shield of strength. The spears of the feeble, whom he passed, come behind. The glittering steel of the warrior rises no more. Mournful is the sound of his fall to Albin's race!—What breast did not sigh? What sword was

was not forth? What spear did not rise for the fallen hero?—The steps of warriors were deep in blood: The collected strength of Albin was in the point of their swords.—The sons of Lochlin fled.

Pursue not the retiring foe, said Scarlaw: Enough of Lochlin's race lies behind. Come near, remaining strength of Albin; let us view our friends that are low. Where is Dowran, Feyglen's warlike son? I saw his forward steps in the bloody field; but my eyes meet him not here.

He lies on the south brow of the battle, said a warrior. The broken spear is in his hand: His shield is the bloody bed of his breast.

Alas! said the chief, too soon has the fate of the warrior met the hero. The sound of Albin's victory shall reach his father; but no son of his shall carry it. A feeble hand will carry back his shield; for the mighty arm that brought it forth, shall no more return.—O Dowran, chief of warriors! thy steps in battle were fierce as the course of the angry storm, when the tallest daughters of the wood bend before the strength of the rushing blast. But
the

the shining of thy armour shall be no more seen in the fields of death. The swords of the mighty may rise ; but thy shield will not oppose the coming storm. The foes of Albin will no more tremble at thy approach : No more shall thy arm be the shield of thy father's gray hairs.

A warrior sighed young Flaian's name. He is not here, said the chief : He lies amid the fallen sons of Lochlin. The strength of his arm failed ; but my son is not alone. He was not backward in the battle. His arm would have been strong ; but he fell like the young plant of Coil. The storm came round it before the spreading roots gathered strength : The blast of the north frowned on its tender leaves ; and it sank, while trees of many years defied the storm.

O Flaian, where are the steps of thy speed, which were wont to bring thee forward in the chace !—They are no longer thine, early sun-beam ! Too soon hast thou retired to thy narrow dwelling. But the stone of fame shall exalt its head, and tell to other years thy fall in the season of thy beauty. The virgins shall

view

view it; and the tear of pity shall glisten on their cheek, like the early dew on the opening rose. The stranger, as he passeth, will ask, 'who lies below?' Then will he hear of thy fall in the morning of thy days; and a sigh will come forth. The warriors of former years will look down from their bed of rest in the land of clouds, and rejoice. They will smile on thy tomb *, as they pass it on the wings of the blast, when their journey is in the storms of the nights of winter.—

The glittering of youthful warriors came round the smoking spear of the chief. He wiped the tear from his eye, when he beheld their future battles.—But Dalav stood distant from

* It was the policy of the ancients to persuade mankind, that those who fell in battle, were happy in a future state. This opinion was of infinite advantage, in acquiring or defending property, as it served to promote a ferocity of courage, in which the Christians themselves seem by no means to be defective. The leaders of each party have piously promised their followers happiness hereafter, as a just reward for the commission of murders and devastations, and inflicting the greatest miseries on their brethren of the human race.

from the rest, in the anguish of his soul. He mourned the weakness of his arm, which brought him not forward in the battle.—He was behind; but shields of strength opposed the hero. The chief saw the downward face of his mourning, as he leaned upon his half-erected spear. Warriors talked of the weight of their steel; but the words of Dalav were not heard.

Son of my youth! thy back was not to the foe: Why then dost thou turn it upon thy father?—I saw the broken shields round the rising of thy spear, and the days of my strength rushed upon my soul. Why should my frowns be towards the hopes of my age? What tho' the son of Feyglen has fallen; a feather has also dropt from Scarlaw's wing of strength.—Flaian shall never more pursue the footsteps of the stag, nor raise the spear against the foe.—But more sons are mine:—Albin will yet rejoice in their strength when I am low.

Never shall Albin rejoice when thou art low, said Dalav: It is from thy sword alone that her foes retire. We raise the spear in vain: In vain does the wrath of our steel attack the

N

foe.

foe. Still are we behind : But thou conquerest, and we come forward.

Thou staidst behind, my son ; not that thine arm was feeble, but because the foe was strong. —But let us view our friends behind, that no son of Albin may sleep without his fame.

Gillion, old warrior, thou art low !—No feeble arm has brought thee down.—Thou wert of those that beheld the battles of my youth.—But the days of my youth shall no more return ; nor thy spear, O Gillion ! ever rise in the fields of death. The foes that sank before thee, were not of the feeble : The broken shields around thee fell not from the hands of little men.—Ye who have fought near me in the days of my youth, Why have ye left me alone ? Ye are gone, my friends ; and I stand, like the oak of Slimora, the only remaining daughter of the forest. Time ! how hast thou disposed of her sisters, which once reared their haughty heads around her ? They wave not now their verdurous branches near. No friendly oak shields her from the fury of the storm. She has survived all her friends. The blasted trunk hangs its leafless boughs in for-

row.

row.—Daughter of years, thy fall is near!
Thou shalt soon be low; and the stream that
bathes thy feet, shall pass over thee.

A young warrior appeared in haste.—I have
been too late, O chief! but the foe may yet
return. My arm is not strong; but I will
fight beside young Flaian of the golden locks.

The strength of thy arm will increase, son
of youth! said the chief: But Flaian will ne-
ver lift the spear of battle. Retire to the hall
of thy fathers, lest thou fall, like him, in the
midst of thy blooming years.

The daughter of Feyglen heard his words.
—She heard;—but withstood them not.—The
shield dropt from her smooth arm:—She fell,
and the clashing steel sounded round her white
bosom.—The tear of the chief was seen;—the
sigh of warriors was heard.—Heroes shook
their heads in awful grief: Silent stood the
darkened host. They saw the daughter of the
chief of Feyglen; and their breath came mourn-
ing from the house of woe. A warrior said,
'her brother too has fallen.' The virgin open-
ed her eyes:—A groan was heard. Dalav
gently raised the swan-bosomed maid: He
raised

raised her with the hand of friendship. The thoughts of his breast had been before of her; but he knew not that the eyes of her love were towards Flaian.—

Give, O son of Scarlaw! said the maid,—give me the sword of Flaian. I will clasp it in my arms in the season of sleep; when my dreams are of him who raised it in battle.—

He gave her the sword.—She kissed the bloody steel.—The bed of its point was her bosom: Her own hand gave the wound.—She fell on the breast of Flaian.—One stone is their tomb.

THE

T H E

CHIEF OF FEYGLLEN*.

THE gray-haired chief of Feyglen leaned
to the tree of the rustling leaf. The
spear of his fathers was not near. It rose
high

* Feyglen, *the valley of deers*.—The subject of this poem is the same as the last; and, is supposed by some, to have been composed by the same bard. This, however, does not appear to be the case. There is a great difference in the manner of both poems in the original. The scarcity of terms in the English to express the feelings of grief, martial achievements, and other incidents with which this poem abounds, contributed much towards destroying this difference of manner in the translation.

The most probable account which tradition gives of the author of this poem, is, that he was family-bard to the chief whose name it bears. He was so much affected with the distresses of his patron, that he took no further notice of the battle described in the preceding poem, than it was connected with the tragical fall of the house which is the subject of this

high in the hands of Dowran against Lochlin's race, issuing in hostile pride from the bosom of the troubled waves.

The golden-haired father of the morning came forth from the back of the eastern hill: He came forth in the steps of his beauty. The retiring clouds of night fly in haste from the coming of his glittering beams. The feathered sons of the forest rejoice in the kindness of his smiles. The soft heaving bosom of the mountain-lake, receives with joy the image of his beauty. The course of feeble waves is towards the trembling brightness. They salute it as they pass; and leave it to adorn the surface of succeeding waves*.

The rolling of thy dim eyes, O chief of battles! is also towards the rising sun; but their darkened course is along the gloomy vale of black-robed night. The smiling beams of the morning are on thy gray hairs; but thine eyes of age behold them not. Darkness is before thee; but thy soul is the seat of light. The feats of former years revolve in the mind

of

* No passage in the present collection has lost so much in the translation, as this description of the sun shining on a lake in a clear morning.

of the hero. The heart of the warrior is great with the deeds of other battles.

Where, said the chief, ah ! where are the days of my youth, when I grasped the shield of my fathers, and was first in the strife of battles ? When the ghosts of the mighty were behind, and the retiring foes of Albin before the glittering of my steel ? When my spear was the shield of the feeble, and my sword the terror of the sons of ocean ? My joy was then in the sound of Morven's battles, when the race of strangers raised spears of strength against her sons. But now the steel of foes is high, and I oppose it not. Morven calls her sons to battle ; but my steps are not towards the foe. My feeble arm grasps no child of the furnace. My darkened eyes direct not the course of my footsteps. Lonely I sit beneath the tree of the trembling leaf !

Let the spear of my fathers be a meteor of death in thy hands, O Dowran, son of my youth ! Be thou the shield of thy father's fame ; and let the falling of my gray hairs rejoice in the sound of thy battles.

Who

Who comes in the noise of the rustling heath? Are thy steps from the strife of heroes? Stop the foot of thy speed, son of haste, and tell how warriors fought. Was Dowran forward in the bloody contest? Were his steps among the broken shields of the foe? Did spears of strength sink before him? Fled the mighty from the weight of his steel? Speak, tongue of the tale; for the darkened eyes of Feyglen behold no more the deeds of heroes.

As the rolling of the huge stone down the haughty brow of Morcraig, when the affrightened flocks stretch every nerve to shun the coming danger, and the torn heath is round the whirling of its rapid journey; so bold, so strong, so terrible was the son of Feyglen, in the fields of death. The mighty saw the coming of his strength, and they sank beneath the weight of his sword. The feeble fled the danger they could not meet. Albin's sons rejoiced in his deeds as they filled his footsteps behind.

Such was the rolling of his might, when the shield of Swanvil met the point of his spear. Stop—said the chief of Lochlin; and let the
collected

collected strength of thy arm be in the darting of thy lance. Strong is the shield before thee, and mighty is the arm that supports the glittering wing of steel. My sword triumphs not in the fall of little men. I mourn when feeble foes are before me. But thy fame is great, O warrior! Thy coming in battle is like the coming of a hundred streams, when their foaming journey is down the shaggy brow of the haughty rock. We have both been renowned; but a gray stone will lift its mossy head on the hill before the storms of other years. The hunter, as he passeth, will cry, 'Here the mighty fought.' If my sword becomes thine, send it, O warrior, to Savina. Her soft-rolling eye meets the rising sun on the plains of Tau-ron. The maid will pierce her bosom with the point, and our ghosts will rejoice in the land of clouds.

No steel from me shall pierce the bosom of the lovely, said Dowran. Yield, warrior, and return in safety to Savina. Her mild eye will view thee with joy, and bless the hand that spared thee in battle.

Q

In

In vain hast thou spoke, son of pride ! Persuasive sweetness is not thine.—Thy words are feeble, like the blast that holds a contest with a stubborn rock. Did the points of five hundred spears meet my shield ; did the strength of a hundred warriors raise each spear ; did the meteors of death fly around me, as the fire of heaven, when bursting clouds roll in horror through the angry sky ;—yet would I not yield.

* Two blue steels rose in wrath. Dowran stood alone. Many sons of Lochlin came behind. A bloody stream was seen.—Swanvil stopped the unequal strife. The thoughts of the valiant darted on his soul. He cursed the coward's spear !

Dowran

* *Le naitheas dh'eirich da lann ghorm, &c.* This passage hath been admired in the original, as comprehending more substance in a certain number of words, than any other poem extant. I have endeavoured to imitate the shortness of the periods in the original, though I am conscious that I have fallen short of its dignity. The Galic reader, however, will find, that no idea hath been totally lost, though but faintly expressed.

Dowran fell not alone. On either side they bleed. The spear is the pillar of his bloody side. His shield rolls on earth. Terrible are the threatening looks of the hero. The foe viewed, and trembled. Ghosts fled from the fallen around. Terrified, they mount the clouds that pass. We heard the warrior's groans. Too late we raised the spear. Many sank with the hero: The rest fled in haste. Swanvil scorned our strength. He fought the sword of Scarlaw. But what son of song can relate the meeting of the two chiefs! Rocks spoke the words of steel. The broken shield sank from Swanvil. His spear shall rise no more.—The race of Lochlin fled. The blast is their shield, as they mount the blue rolling waves.

The aged Feyglen listened in the anguish of his soul to the tale of woe. A tear wanders down his wrinkled cheek. He clasps his hands in grief. Many groans come forth.—Mournful are his words.

A blatt has withered the plains. A cloud has darkened the sky.—Joy meet the soul of the valiant. Never shall the spear of my father
there

thers rise in battle ! I shall vanish, like a dim shadow that wanders, before the rays of the moon. No son of mine shall raise the huge stone near my narrow dwelling. My name shall cease to sound in the years that approach. My departure shall be as the blast that flies unheeded over the mountains.—A sudden beam of comfort rushes on my soul. Sulalin, image of her who was lovely ! reach me thy white hand. Gather thy waving locks from the wind. Dry thy father's cheek with thy soft ringlets. A tear from thy blue eyes shall bathe my memory on the mountains. A plant may rise from thy side. The spear of Feyglen may yet rise in battle.—A ray of comfort rushes on the wretched. Forgot I shall not be, soft beam of youth !

The chief stretched forth his hand. But he stretched it to the wind.—No white arm received it: No soft voice was heard.—A blast that withers rushed through his nerves. He trembled as a feeble twig before the haughty storm. Breeze after breeze saluted the woods; but the gray-haired Feyglen listened in vain.

—The

—The soft voice of Sulalin is not mingled with the wind.

A black cloud is gathering in the east. Why do the oaks bend their green heads before it? Why do the rocks rear their cliffy brows to meet it in wrath?—A hundred sighs are heard, as it flies in furlly speed over the mountains. The tears of heroes pour forth before it. The death of the lovely has darkened its gloomy aspect. The fold of the cloud is the wing of a tale of woe.

Bathe thy dim eyes in tears, chief of the aged locks!—She who was bright in thy hall, sleeps cold in death. The ghost of the virgin rose on the fairest beam of the morning. The son of Scarlaw is the partner of her flight to the land of clouds. Piercing are thy words, son of the mournful tale.—But the eyes of Shearvan have already shed all their tears: His feeble breast hath already poured forth all its sighs. The rocks of Ardven have heard it, and returned their groans of pity.—But thou travellest in thy mirth, O son of heaven! regardless of my woes. And long mayest thou rejoice in thy blue fields, thou brightest tenant
of

of the sky ! The children of an hundred glens look with the eye of expectation for the coming forth of thy beauty, though the darkened eyes of Shearvan refuse to admit thy beams. But some day, like me, they will look in vain. Stormy clouds will wrap thee in their dark folds, when the battles of many ghosts are in thy land. Thou wilt then, like me, weep; but the wrathful winds will not regard thee.

But roll on, in all the strength of thy brightness, fair-haired traveller of the sky ! Carry with thee all thy smiles to cheer the valiant who sleep in the Isle of Peace. The course of thy speed all day is towards them. The angry storms terrify not thee. Sullen clouds may veil thy beauty; but they cannot oppose thee. The couch of thy repose is with the ghosts of our fathers. There thou layest down thy fair head to rest; and the feeble children of the wind sleep among the golden locks of thy beauty.

O Sulalin! when other ghosts are asleep, steal thou in secret to the dreams of thy father. Tell me if Culoina has forgot me in the season

of

of my gray hairs; she who had seen me in the days of my strength. But my strength is fled, like a blast to the desert: My friends have vanished as the mist on Ardven. Heavy are mine eyes of age! leave me to my rest, ye tenants of the hills.—Come, Sulalin! to the dreams of my slumbers.

Such were the words of the chief in the season of his woe. The voice of his grief was heard no more: His sighs ceased to mingle with the wind. His tomb lifts its head high on Ardven. The traveller listens to his tale with streaming eyes:—For he fell, like the last tree of the forest, when no plant remains to tell the place where it stood.

THE

T H E

+ CAVE OF CREYLA *

 COLD was the blast from the regions of frost, and fatal proved the furly offspring of the north to the feeble reapers of the flowery field. Legions of insects perished by the poisonous breath of the reigning storm. The feathered songster stopped the warbling note at the frowning approach of the rude intruder.

The Father of light withdrew his circular presence beyond the southern hill. Feeble were his oblique rays, which, half intercepted, dimly

+ * Creyla, the woody rock, supposed to be one of the Grampian hills which still retains that name.

X The scene of this poem is said to have been in that valley round the head of the river Spey, which is, at present, known by the name of Bha-dianach, or Badnoch, the *se-cure valley*.

dimly shone o'er the tops of the mountains. The congealer of the liquid stream, who annually retires beyond the northern ocean, further than the cleavers of the waves can trace his rapid flight, returned from his summer expedition. He now began to usurp his tyrannical reign, in the absence of the fire of brightness, whose presence he would have shunned with a speed equal to his who flies from impending destruction. Nature trembles at the approach of the cruel spoiler; and the feeble among her sons fall victims to the resistless oppressor. He locks up the stream from the shaggy tenants of the forest; and the finny inhabitants of the flood dwell in darkness, while in vain they search for the intercepted day.

Such was the season, and dismal was the visage of the mountains, when Liachan led his six sons to the cave of Creyla. The frozen offspring of the sky had closed up the unfrequented entrance: But an impending cliff, which projected from the mother rock, contended with the passing blast; and the murmuring noise pointed out the door of the cave

P

to

* Lia-chean, gray head.

to the trembling leader of the youthful band.

Thrice did Liachan bless the lonely cavern as he entered, and thrice did the flinty pillars of the rock, with their echoing voices, return the friendly salutation through the hollow centre. The well-known cave recalled to the remembrance of the sage the companions of his youth, when he retired from danger to this gloomy cell. A deep sigh issued from his aged bosom, when his mind rolled back to the deeds of other years. He dropt the tear of affection to the memory of his departed friends.

Ranal, the last born son of his father, the swift ascender of the hill, misconstruing the cause of the trembling tear, opened his mouth, and pronounced the words of comfort to his disconsolate fire.

Why dwells muteness on the tongue, which was wont to claim attention, when the formers of the ring round the burning ourd, * har-
kened

* The ourd is the trunk of a large tree set on fire, round which the Highlanders solemnize particular festivals; a custom rigidly observed at this day, in many parts of the Highlands,

kened to the words of instruction? Welcome was the lovely offspring of thy mouth to the listning croud. Even the venerable bard, the ruler of the human heart, increased his knowledge, when he lent the ear of attention to the manly strains which issued from the lips of Liachan. Why then sits the emblem of remorse on the brow on which the industrious propagators of slander could not trace the image of guilt? If the trembling visage of fear, which was wont to be a stranger to thy breast, has paid thee an unaccustomed visit, spurn from thy bosom with a smile the ungracious guest. Though thy feeble hand cannot grasp the weapons of resistance, strong ought to be that arm which unsheathes the sword to attack

Highlands, where the ourd is annually provided for Christmas eve, and the first night of the new year. Some traditions in the Galic language represent this custom as a monument raised from the ruins of barbarism, and inform us, that the fire-wood which the sons of cruelty were accustomed to provide, in the days of idolatry, to sacrifice human victims to imaginary deities, was afterwards happily converted into the ourd, to raise the voice of mirth in the hall, while the bards sung the deeds of heroes.

tack thee ; for none of Liachan's sons, in the hour of danger, ever purchased their safety by retreat.

Stop, Ranal, said Liachan, these tears are not the offspring of fear ; thou art a stranger to the cause. Thy sympathising eyes shall also yield their tributary drop, as soon as thou knowest the source from which they flow. The tale is unknown on the banks of the Tay*. I have wrapped it up with the finger of secrecy, till the nerves of my children gained strength to redeem their just rights by the glittering son of the furnace. Draw hither, my sons, and listen with the ears of attention to the unfeigned words of Liachan. Learn from them to avoid the follies of youth ; so shall the tears of age never bedew your wrinkled cheeks.

But first let the spark of thy steel, Callan, dispel the gloom of the cave. Stop thou the speed of the stag, Ranal. The oaks of Creyla are many : Let a withered trunk blaze before me. But spare the feeble plant : Let the youthful branches wave in the wind. The
summer's

* Tadh from Fladh, the kindly stream.

summer's sun will yet return, and smile upon their tender leaves. The bounty of the spring will increase their strength; and warriors yet unheard of, will rejoice round their flames in distant years.—

The arrow of Ranal pierced a stag. The sword of Callan brought the fire from the rock.—Trees fell before Aspar; and why should Altban, Duchan, and Ogier, be forgot?—They were not idle.

Long had the frowning visage of darkness been the gloomy tenant of the cave: But the flaming breath of the oaks now expelled the ungracious intruder. A smile shone on the flinty cliffs. The chief viewed them, and sighed.—The image of the lovely half-appeared. He thought of the beam that had set.

In vain, says Callan, have we spread the feast: In vain hath the friendly oak blazed before thee. Thy dim eyes wander o'er the cave in sorrow: The tear of woe comes glittering forth.

And let them come, said Liachan.—The drop on one cheek bathes the memory of thy mother:

mother : The offspring of the other eye is for the fate of him, who has no son to warm his cave in the days of his gray hairs.—The storms that travel o'er the mountains reach not me. Your friendship hath spread joyful smiles round my cave; but cold is the seat of him who hath lost his sons in the days of his youth.

I ask for light, and it shines:—He asks for light, and darkness is around him. My stag lies by the flame of my oaks: His stag flies abroad in the forest. No son of his pursues it with the footsteps of speed.—I am warm, and the assiduity of my sons is round me; but he is cold, and his pale cheek leans against a pillar of ice—Alas, son of age! wert thou near, my children should warm thy cave also.—

The arm of my father Tomduth was the shield of my feeble years. In safety I rose behind it, like the tender shrub that rears its soft head near the stately oak. The blast on either side frowns in vain: The strength of many years meets it. The course of its flight is backwards, and the sound of its wrath is heard

heard on distant rocks. So fled the foes of Inver * from the sword of Tomduth.

As Trombia † in her hollow bed gathers her liquid strength from the fertile nerves of a thousand crystal rills, extending their winding arms round the heathy mountains; so gathered the evening the flocks of Tomduth to the plains of Eliau.

The meeting of warriors was in the hall of Inver. Benvel ‡ struck the harp to the fame of departed heroes, and implanted the image of valour in the vacant breast of the rising generation. Hospitality stood at the outer gate, and with the finger of invitation waved to the traveller as he passed on his way. The chief stood unequalled in wisdom and valour. The venerable bard raised his voice to proclaim it. But where is the strength of the chief? Where the music of the bard?—Tomduth lies unactive

* *In-bher* signifies a place where a lesser river joins a greater, or empties itself into the ocean. All the towns in Scotland, whose names begin with *Inver*, are thus situated, as *Inver-ness*, *Inver-dry*, *Inver-keithing*, &c.

† *Trom-bidh*, *heavy stream*, a river which owes its birth to a lake in the valley of *Gauig*, and empties itself into the *Spey*, a little below *Ruthven*.

‡ *Bein-bheal*, *sweet voiced*.

active in the tomb of Killmore *. Eternal muteness reigns on the quivering tongue of Benvel. The father of the song shall no more be heard at the feast of Balden †.

The chief retired not like a misty cloud before the face of the blast. He foresaw his fall; and his son received the words of instruction.

Liachan, I am old.—The meteors of death have warned me to depart ‡. I go to visit the

* *Cill* signifies a place of interment. St Andrew's is at present known by no other name in the Galic than Cill-ribhen, *the royal burial place*.

† The modern Beltane is but a corruption of this word. The feast was kept on the first day of summer. A particular kind of bread used at it, is still made in several parts of the Highlands at this day. The leaven, before it is fired, is spread on both sides with a liquid, composed of yolks of eggs, sweet cream, butter, &c. If any family neglects to use this bread, on that day, it is positively asserted, that their flocks will diminish that year; and several precedents are produced to authenticate the fact.—So effectually has superstition consecrated this custom.

‡ The inhabitants of different parts of the Highlands give different accounts of these meteors of death. The most curious are those of the people round the river Spey. The meteor here does not, as in other places, appear like
fire

the ghosts of our fathers. Come to the rocks of Creyla: Receive an assylum sacred to the chief of Inver.

The warrior was bright in the armour of his fathers: But the liquid fons of sorrow rushed to my eyes, and concealed him from my eager view. My throat denied a passage to the thoughts of my breast; they were big, and could only find their passage by halves. Words, at last, were formed from the broken accents.

Q

—We

fire flying in the air; but is heard with a feeble voice, slowly traversing the path which the funeral is to pass, and is called *Tachran*. Persons are said to be deaf to the noise of their own *Tachran*, though others hear it so distinctly, that they can trace its progress to the house from which the funeral is soon to proceed.

The *Tachrans* are very different from the ghosts, as they are never known to do any harm; for, if a person pursues them, they always retire.

Persons, whose veracity cannot be called in question in other matters, relate unaccountable stories concerning them, to which they declare themselves to have been witnesses.—This furnishes an instance of the unbounded power which superstition maintains over the mind; and displays the force of that rhetoric by which she persuades the human race to become her votaries, in whatever preposterous garb she chuses to appear.

—We passed thro' the glen of Elian.—The wind of the north came rushing o'er the heath, and rattled on the armour of Tomduth as it passed: The armour of Tomduth regarded it not; and we reached the cave of Creyla, as if quietness had been the ruler of the night.

Tomduth was tall: He leaned upon his half-erected spear as he entered. The spear saluted the threshold. Fire fled the daughter of the rock, at the embrace of the steel. The flinty sisters of the cave echoed a chorus to the sound, to welcome the chief, the only visitor of the lonely cell.

This cave, said Tomduth, is hitherto unknown to the sons of the heath. Let it protect the feeble of thy race, if thy foes shall urge the contest; but seek not thy own safety in concealment. Fly not in the face of danger; nor tremble when the meteors of death are around thee. Be not the first to draw, nor the first to sheath the sword. Avoid not the combat with the mighty; but shun the ignoble contest. Let thy face be to the strong, and thy back to the feeble foe.

Make

Make not the daughter of Dungeal * the mother of thy sons. Poison not the offspring of thy loins by mingling in their composition the juice of a baneful plant. Let the milky food of their infant days be derived from a pure fountain : So shall they be defended from the weeds which corrupt the heart.

The words of instruction were ended ; and the daughters of the rock ceased to enforce the precepts of the chief. Muteness was in the cave ; and nought was heard but the voice of night, which in hoarse accents saluted the rocks as it passed.

The tomb of the chief rose on Killmore : Benvel's song of woe was heard round the ourd. The tear of beauty bedewed the cheek of the virgin : Warriors shook their dejected heads as they met. Rocks joined in pity the sound of grief : Each breeze was the messenger of a tale of woe.

Stormal

* *Dun-geal, white tower* — The house of Dungeal are said to have been the progenitors of the Cummings, lords of Badenoch, whose transactions are so well known in the history of Scotland.

Stormal was the stately son of Dungeal. He led the warriors of his father to battle. The arrow of random fled not from his bow. She continued her journey to the distant mark; and fatal proved her arrival to the breast of the foe.

Sulgorma * was the feat of a thousand beauties. Many heroes wooed the maid; but the thoughts of her dreams were of Liachan, though I regarded not the kindly glances of her blue eyes.—So look the wishing eyes of the bewildered traveller in search of the intercepted beams, when the loaded sky leans her burden of mist on the hills of Minaig. But the ungrateful tenant of the enlightened vale views, with eyes of indifference, the bountiful favours of the Father of light.

The feast of Balden was spread at Dungeal. Bards sung the tales of love.—I forgot the words of instruction, and opened my eyes to the beauties of Sulgorma. I looked in kindness on the maid, and saw her clothed in loveliness. Our meetings were often in secret, and

we

* Suil'-gorm, blue-eyed.

we thought of each other in the season of dreams.

Benvel saw my love for Sulgorma, and the friendly resentment of his breast awaked.—

Son of Tomduth, said the bard, departed is the fame of thy house ! The words of instruction thou hast regarded as the blast that flies o'er the mountains.— Luachos, of the race of bards, bring my harp, and place my partner in danger by my side. I will wander to other lands. Too long hath my song been heard at Inver.

Son of the days of old, said I, weighty are thy words. Feeble is the breath of unripened years; and fruitless are her efforts when arrogantly she endeavours to oppose the offspring of thy mouth. Thy tongue has given birth to piercing words; but Liachan stands reproved by the frowns of friendship. Were the beauties of Sulgorma as the sun of heaven in the infancy of day, never should she shine in the hall of Inver.

Malalin * of the graceful eye, the beautiful daughter of the chief of Ervin, mourned the
fall

* Mal-alin, graceful eye-brow.—Er-bhin, western bill.

fall of her father. The emblem of grief sat on her cheek. I blessed the maid of woe, and brought her to the hall of my fathers.

Stormal heard the secret sigh of Sulgorma, and raised his threatening spear. Many were his warriors, and weighty was his sword in the day of death. I gathered the strength of Inver to oppose him; but feeble proved my arm in every contest; for my spear was raised against an injured foe.

Many were the years of our strife; and many the deaths of our warriors. When the force of Inver failed, I brought Malalin to the cave of Creyla*. The safety of my sons was her care. I slew the deer of the desert, and carried them to our feast.

But, blessed be the soul of her who feasts no more in my cave!—When the daughter of Ervin retired to the land of ghosts, I carried my sons to the tower of the woody vale, by the
side

* It was customary for every great family to have a secret cave, or place of concealment from their enemies, when they were forced to fly in battle. The vestiges of some of these caves are still to be seen; but, when once they became known, they were of no further use.

side of the friendly stream. There Gildea *
wiped the tear of grief from mine eye. My
sons rose like the young plants of the forest.
Their hills are many round the streams of
Speymore; and their arms are now strong to
fight the battles of Inver against the intruding
race of Dungeal.

* Of Gill a *servant*, and Dea God.—The *Gillindea*, i. e. *servants of God*, mentioned in antient poetry, is the true origin of what was afterwards corrupted, by writers who understood not the language, into *Kelledei*, or *Culdees*.

An explanation of some surnames in Scotland will put the truth of this beyond a doubt. Gilchrist, *Christ's servant*; Gilespie, *the Bishop's servant*; Gilmoro, *the great servant*, &c.

COLMALA

COLMALA AND ORWI*.

WHY does the tear of woe trickle down
the wrinkled cheek of Chrimor?—
Often has the stranger feasted in his hall;
when the shell of mirth went round, and bards
sung the warriors of other days. His friends
are many in other lands, but mournful is the
chief. His mighty son sleeps among the waves,
and the soul of the aged is sad.—

Colmala and Orwi, the maids of the hill of
hinds, were clothed with loveliness: The
locks of their beauty flew on the wings of the
wind. White was the heaving of two fair bo-
soms behind their polished bows. Often had
they led their father's hounds to the chace; for
the old hero sat lonely in his hall, and mourn-
ed the fall of all his sons,

Many

* Col-mhalla, *small eye-brow*.—Or-bhiedh, *yellow locks*.
Chri-mor, *great soul*.—Fer-guth, *the man of the word*.

Many warriors followed the daughters of beauty to the chace, and poured forth their sighs in secret. But warriors sighed in vain; for one was their love, and stately was he! the mighty son of Chrimor. The friendly beams of both their soft eyes were towards the hunter; but fixed was his love on Colmala, the maid of the raven locks.

Daughter of my father, said Orwi, thou love of Fergus! death is at my heart I feel it there, my friend.—Wilt thou raise a tomb o'er the unhappy?—My father is old, and thou art the choice of my hunter. He will, perhaps, aid thee, and give a stone. So shall Orwi sleep in peace; nor shall her pale ghost wander among the clouds of stormy night, when the north pours its frozen venom on the lifeless plains.

Alas! Orwi, thou sister of my love, why so pale?—What shall Colmala do, to draw death from thy bosom?—Thou must not fall in the strength of thy beauty, thou graceful bearer of the bow!

But soon shall I cease to bear the bow.—My life is in the mountain-ash, that rears its

R

tofty

lofty head on sea-surrounded Tonmore *. The
 crimfon fruit of the red-haired tree is in bloom.
 One branch would fave the life of Orwi:—
 But no hunter is her's, and the fons of little
 men fhun the ifle of death with horror:—No
 brother of love to raife his white fails, and
 bring life to Orwi over the waves.—I fall un-
 heeded on the plain: Raife the tomb of the
 unhappy, thou fifter of Orwi!

Yes, Orwi! thy tomb fhall rife:—But the
 fon of thy fon fhall raife it. A red haired
 branch of the mountain-afh fhall travel over
 many

* Tonn-mor, *the ifle of great waves*, is faid to have been
 one of the Orcades, then in the poffeffion of the Norwe-
 gians. The inhabitants had been told by their bards, that,
 if ftrangers faw the beautiful berries of their mountain-afh,
 they would thereby be tempted to invade their country;
 and, with a pretenfion to foreknowledge peculiar to the
 times, affured them, that, if a branch of it was carried
 from their ifland, they fhould be no longer a people. The
 populace, always liable to be deceived, and ever ready to
 enlift under the banner of fuperftition, faw clearly the
 propriety of this prediction; and, in the heat of enthu-
 aftical zeal, took precautions againft it in a more aulfere
 manner, than perhaps the bards at firft intended, by kill-
 ing every ftranger who came to the ifland.

many seas to the maid of the yellow locks. Fergus lifts the spear of the mighty; and he will bring it from the isle of death.

Colmala bore the groans of Orwi to the youth of her love. He sighed for the sickly maid:—He called his warriors from his hundred glens. The sons of battle grasped their massy swords. He rushed in the strength of his dark ships into the blue plains of ocean; and raised the spreading wings of his speed before the wind. Many seas he passed; and the joy of his soul was great when the isle of Tonmore rose on the top of the waves.

Whence is the speed of the strangers, said Anver, the gloomy chief of Tonmore?

From Innis-gaul *, the land of many isles, we come.—A mountain-ash bends over thy rocks: The fame of the red-haired plant has travelled over many seas. The life of a virgin is in the taste of the crimson fruit. Yield a branch to the maid of woe, thou chief of Tonmore;

* Innis-ghaull, *the islands of strangers*. The western isles are, at this day, known by that name in the Galic. The strangers here alluded to, are the Danes, who appear to have been in possession of these isles for some centuries.

Tonmore ; and the mighty shall be thy friends
in the woody straths of Albin.

In vain have ye passed o'er many seas, ye sons
of Innis-gaul ! Did the strength of all your
land appear, the strength of all your land were
in vain. No branch of the sacred tree shall
ever travel to the land of strangers. Unhap-
py are they who ask it :—Never more shall
they return to the hall of their fathers. Un-
happy are ye, sons of the sea ; for never more
shall ye raise your white wings of speed.—
Bring my sword of the heavy wounds.—Ga-
ther my warriors with their spears of strength.
—Raise the sign of death on Luman. Let
the sons of the strangers fall in their blood.

Fergus raised his terrible voice ; nor silent
stood the rocks of Tonmore. They fore-
saw the death of their people, and the sigh of
woe issued from the hardest flint.—But plea-
sant are the words of the chief to the rising
wrath of his faithful warriors.

Ye have heard the words of the surly: My
friends ! we are in the land of death. Shall we
sink like the harmless roe before the spear of
the

the hunter? Shall we fall like the tender lily of the vale before the blast of the north?—Yes, my friends, we may fall: But the aged chief of Strathmore shall not blush for his people.

Then Fergus raised his bossy shield, and shook his spear of death. His warriors gathered around, like a rock that gathers strength to meet the storm. The sons of Tonmore fell in blood. The spear of Fergus was a meteor of death. The surly king shrunk from its wrath.—Fly to thy gloomy hall, thou leader of the feeble! Fergus scorns thy death;—it would darken his battles.

The chief of Tonmore is overcome, and bound: His people are dispersed.—The mountain-ash falls on the plains of death. Ten warriors bear it to the dark ships of Fergus.—He raised his wings of speed. The wind came from the north; but it came in wrath, and aroused the sable surges from their sullen sleep.

The tear of the cloud flies on the blast: Waves rear their green heads to meet it. The fire of heaven darts over the waves. The
battles

battles of ghosts are in the sky. Liquid mountains raise their white locks before the wrath of the storm: Brown rocks gather strength to meet them. Proud billows spend their rage on the eliffy shore: Their retiring groans are terrible. The peasant hears it, and rejoices in his safety. The stag starts by times from his heathy couch. The eagle dreams of his fluttering prey. The croppers of the flowery field are half awake. The droufy eye-lids of the feathered flock are open. Half-extended, wings lean on the wind:—The dread of surrounding gloom prevents their flight.

The wearied storm now makes a pause.—Clouds lean their empty breasts on the mountains. Winds cease to roar, and trees to bend beneath their fury. The breath of night is silent. The waving heath now sleeps in peace, or trembles before the intermitting breeze.

The moon looks forth from the skirts of a dark cloud: The tear of the lovely glitters in the beam. Colmala mourns on the shore of the isle of oaks. Her long shadow wanders from rock to rock. Her raven-hair sighs in the gale: Her variegated garment flutters in
the

the wind.—Two black eyes roll in sorrow o'er
the foaming deep ; but the floating oak of her
lover mounts not the rising billows.

Blast followed blast. Cloud rolled on cloud.
Star after star went to rest in the west. But
no bold prow came cleaving the face of the
deep.—A hundred times fancy saw the bark :
A hundred times it proved a surge of ocean.

A sail at last reared its nodding head before
the moon. A shadow rolls from wave to
wave. Stars are hid behind its folds. A fresh-
ning gale swelled the sail, and added to its
speed.—The tear of the virgin ceased. A
beam of joy rushed on her soul :—She blessed
the strength of the oak.

A threatening rock raised its dark head ;
The furious waves are repelled. The wind is
behind the bark : The rock meets it in wrath.
—The sail nods no more.—A hundred screams
are heard.—Colmala re-echoed the sound.
Her piercing cries rend the air : Her white
bosom meets the flood. The lover can receive
no aid ; nor will the maid survive him. Sea-
wolves tear her beauteous limbs :—Her ghost
rushed

rushed through the flood. Two dim forms
 rose from a wave; they mount a misty cloud,
 Often they return from their dwelling in the
 sky.—The mariner shuns with horror the rock
 of death, near the verge of ocean's wing*.

THE

* It was observed, in honour to the Caledonians, by a gentleman well acquainted with their antient poetry, that no private discord ever subsisted among the offspring of the same family. The present poem furnishes an instance to the contrary; as the destruction of Fergus, and disappointment of her sister, was the design of Orwi, whose subsequent history the bard passes over with that contemptuous neglect which her character deserves. In alleviation of this lady's crime, however, let it be remembered, that she is entitled to make the same defence so often made for others in her situation; she was in love, and disappointed. Although this apology cannot take off the odium with which her character is clogged, it places it in a more favourable light, than if she had been actuated by mercenary views.

THE

OLD BARD'S WISH*.

O PLACE me by the side of the murmuring
rill, that gently glides with downward-
rolling pace ! Lay my head in the shade of the
spreading branches, and be thy friendly beams,
O sun ! in kindness around me.—There at ease
let my side embrace the green grafs on the
bank of the flowery garb, and let me taste the
friendship of the breeze as it passes. Let my
S feet,

* Tradition does not pretend to give the name of the author of this poem.—Those who rehearse it, at present, in the Highlands, differ with respect to the arrangement. Compositions of a pastoral strain, are more liable to this confusion, than those of a narrative ; as one part leads to another. The reader will find the present version different from that of Mr M'Donald's, who lately published the original in his collection of Galic poems ; but the Translator has adopted that which appeared the most rational.

142 THE OLD BARD'S WISH.

feet, bathed in the crystal flood, feel the struggling efforts of the yielding stream in its hasty journey.

Let the lily of purest complexion smile near me on the yielding stalk; and the trembling dew glitter on the waving locks of my verdant seat. Let my hand recline on the daïsied turff, and let the fragrant thyme be the pillow of my leaning cheek.

Round on the high erected brows of my glen, let the hawthorn spread its blooming boughs, and the little children of the bushes rejoice in the songs of their love, repeated by the invisible tenants of the rock.

Bursting from the opening jaws of the bird-haunted rock, let the new-born spring sing melodious notes in a mournful tone; and let the hidden sons of the rock, from their hollow caverns, join the music of the sounding stream.

Let the variegated hills, and the wide extended dales, re-echoe the voice of the joyful flocks, while a hundred lowings are heard from the sides of surrounding vallies.

Borne

THE OLD BARD'S WISH. 143

Borne on the wings of the passing breeze,
let the gentle voice of the sportive lamb salute
my ear; and come, thou little kid, from the
rocks, and sleep in safety within the folds of my
arms.

O let the hasty steps of the hunter be near
me, with the rattling noise of his darts, and
his hounds rushing along the extended heath!
A beam of youth will glitter on my cheek,
when the stag-hunting noise shall arise.

When the panting breath of dogs and youths
is round me, the marrow of my bones will re-
vive; and, when the fall of the stag is pro-
claimed, my heels shall leap in joy along the
tops of the mountains.

Then shall I meet the hound, my compa-
nion in the chase, when the rocks were wont
to answer to the voice of the horn. I will
enter the friendly cave, to whose hospitable door
we bent our steps at the approach of night.—
Chearfulness smiled round the gleam of our
oaks: In the joys of our cups there was much
mirth. The ascending smoke was from the
feast of deer: Our drink from the stream of
Triga.

144 THE OLD BARD'S WISH.

Triga*: Tho' ghosts had shrieked, and fairies
screamed from their green hillocks, safe below
the protecting roof of the cave, sweet was our
repose.

What hill can vie with thee, O Beinard †,
thou chief of a thousand hills! The dreams
of slugs are in thy locks. Thy head is the bed
of clouds.

Scuralt rears his cliffy head near. The wa-
ving tops of a thousand green firs nod on his
brows. The voice of the cuckoo mingles with
the soft blast that travels in kindness through
the sky. The peasant hears it, and rejoices
in

* Triga, the stream which forsakes the hills.

† Bein-ard, high mountain.—The word *mountain* is used here
not as a proper explanation of *Bein*, but because the English
can furnish no better. That language discovers a great
degree of poverty, when we examine those few terms it
gives to the various convexities which appear on the sur-
face of the earth. The Galic affords no less than nine
names for hills, according to their different shapes and
sizes, of which *Bein* is the loftiest. For these the English
can only produce two, *hill* and *mountain*.

When objects of this nature frequently occur, there
must be a *jameness*; and the bards, by these means, may
be blamed for what is evidently the fault of the language
into which they are translated.

vid:
Shaw

THE OLD BARD'S WISH. 145

in the returning smiles of summer. Early herbs shoot forth their green heads. Young roes gather strength. The elk majestic strides from hill to hill.

Half-formed waves travel along the smooth-faced lake below. Woody islands raise their green firs before them. The mountain-ash bends over the flood. The white-bosomed daughter of the stream mounts the soft billows: Her extended neck rises on the wandering waves. When she spreads her wings above the mountains, her flight is quick from cloud to cloud. Over boisterous seas she travels to other lands, where the cleavers of the wave never raised the swelling sail.

On what distant shore does the wind meet thy mournful song, son of my youth * ! Are
thy

* This address of the bard to his absent son, is handed down with some difference. Several persons who rehearse the rest of the poem, omit this altogether. Others confuse it, by repeating it as altogether addressed to the swan. This mistake seems to arise from the similarity of sound in the two words *Ealla*, swan, and *Ghilla*, thou youth.—After the Translator had collected all he could, he found the passage still wrapped in obscurity: Tradition, however, pretends to throw some light on it.

The

146 THE OLD BARD'S WISH.

thy tears for the fallen? Has the white armed daughter of beauty vanished before the eager glances of thy wishing eyes?—Peace round the tomb of the lovely!

Come forth from thy dark cave, voice of woe! The beam that is set shall not return. Rush from the womb of the rock. Gather thy floating oaks: Raise thy white wings of speed. Mount the high brows of the tumbling waves: Roll in swiftneſs before the ſtrength of the travelling blaſt. Come to the banks of my lonely glen. Let me hear thy melodious ſong

The bard, who was himſelf a chief, had an only ſon, who fell deeply in love with Lavinia, the beautiful daughter of Thalbar. Lavinia was drowned as ſhe was bathing in the lake of Triga. Morlav, the bard's ſon, becoming deſperate, from the death of his miſtreſs, ſailed for the Orkney iſles, hoping to fall in the wars of that prince, who was then at variance with the king of Norway. His valour and good conduct, however, gained him great fame; and, after the Norwegians were defeated and expelled the iſles, the prince, in conſideration of his ſervices, and perſonal merit, offered Morlav his daughter in marriage, which he reſuſed, and retired to a cave in a lonely iſle, where his father heard he ſtill continued to mourn his loſt Lavinia.

THE OLD BARD'S WISH. 147

song warbling in plaintive accents from thy breast of woe. Be thou on the tops of my mountains, and let the mournful tale of thy love be in thy mouth, O youth, who has travelled from the land of green waves! Pour forth thy luxuriant music in the bosom of the wind. Attention will seize my ears. I will snatch thy tale from the skirts of the fleeting cloud, when its misty journey is over the peaceful lake.

Tell me, for my sight is failed, O wind! where does the reed of the mournful sound raise its waving head? On what fertile mead is the gathering of its strength? Whistle among its locks as thou passest, friendly blast, and direct me to its dwelling.

Lend me thy aid, arm of strength! Place me before the kindness of the sun, when his darting favours are from the center of the azure arch. Spread forth thy broad wing, green-robed branch, and be the shield of my dim eyes from the fervour of the mid-day blaze. Then come, O memory of the past! in the likeness of a dream which travels in the season of stars. Come to the couch of my
slumbers,

148 THE OLD BARD'S WISH.

slumbers, and refresh me with the deeds of youth.

Behold, O my soul ! yon beautiful maid, under the rustling wing of the oak, stately king of the forest ! her white hand, the pillar of her glowing cheek, half-hid among the golden ringlets of her flowing hair. The darts from her swift rolling eye are towards the happy youth of her love. He leans on her bosom. She listens to his song in silence. The soft breeze from his mouth has raised a gentle tempest. White waves travel along the bosom of the virgin. Love flies from eye to eye. Deers stop their course on the heath. Their feet forget to move at the sound of the tale of love.

Now the song has ceased. The heaving of her white bosom meets the breast of her lover ; and her lips, like the rose, blushing on the mead, are pressed by the happy youth.

Happiness without end to the tender pair, who have awaked in my mind a glimpse of those pleasures that shall not return ! Joy to thy soul, lovely virgin of the soft-waving locks !

Haft

THE OLD BARD'S WISH. 149

Hast thou forsaken me, happy dream? Return yet one transient gleam, O memory of the past!—But, alas, thou heardst me not. Sorrow rushes on my soul, like the winged blast that whistles in my aged locks.—Ye mountains who have seen my strength, farewell! Farewell, dear companions of my youth!—Ye virgins of the beautiful aspect, adieu! The joy of summer is yours; but my winter shall be everlasting.

O lay me near the hoarse voice of the falling stream, that tumbles in frothy haste from the cliffy brow; and let the last shutting of my eyes be softened by the soothing sound. Place my harp, and a full shell by my side; and let the shield that covered my fathers in battle be near.

Come, O cloud, that travels over many seas! Bear me on thy misty wings to the Isle of Peace, where the heroes of old nod their dim heads in awful slumbers. Open the hall where Os-
sian and Dea! reside *; for the evening will

T come

* This passage furnishes an instance of the vanity to which every class of men is liable, when once the popu-
lace

150 THE OLD BARD'S WISH.

come when the bard shall be no more. But, oh ! before it comes,—before my ghost shall travel to Ardven, from whence there is no return, give me the harp, and the shell for the journey. Then, my beloved harp and shell, —then, farewell * !

lace profess themselves their disciples. The veneration which mankind entertained for the bards, encouraged that order to carry its pretensions of superiority to an extraordinary height. They imagined that a magnificent hall was appropriated for them in FLATHINNIS, to which no vulgar ghost could be admitted ; and that they should there receive the rewards due to the strenuous exertion of their talents while on earth, to reclaim and cultivate the human race.—This opinion, if not rational, seems at least natural ; for it has made its appearance among another class of men, who pretend to be directed by infallible rules.

* A palpable contradiction appears in this paragraph, which, however, a knowledge of the opinions of the ancients will help to explain. It was imagined, that the ghosts of departed friends came to conduct the spirit of the deceased to *Flathinnis*. As these ghosts were supposed to be still susceptible of the pleasures which they enjoyed while on earth, music, and the liquor which they drank out of the shell, were provided in great plenty on these occasions, in order that they might take a sufficient quan-

ity

THE OLD BARD'S WISH. 151

tity of food and mirth, to enable them to perform their journey to paradise with the more alacrity. If a deficiency was found in the entertainment, the ghosts were to be revenged on those whose business it was to have provided it properly. Thus it became sacrilege to have a funeral ill provided. The bard here desires the harp and shell to be ready to entertain his departed friends, and then bids them farewell, as he would have no further occasion for them.

DUCHOIL'S

X DUCHOIL'S ELEGY*.

NO feeble voice is thine, son of death!
No boy's staff is thy dart. The
mighty overcome in battle; but they sink be-
fore thee. No shield can meet thy spear: No
arm can oppose thy strength. All the heroes
of former days have dropt into the grave at
thy nod!

The mighty bend before thee with the
feeble; but they shall not, like them, be for-
got

X * Duth-choil, *black wood* — This chief is much cele-
brated by tradition for his hospitality to strangers, for
whom he always kept open table. It is said, that such
numbers came from Ireland to live on his bounty, that
he was obliged, for obvious reasons, to make a law, that
no stranger should continue on a visit longer than a year
and a day, unless he could give a sufficient reason for it.
During that space of time, any person had a right to de-
mand entertainment, without even giving an account of
himself; but, at the expiration of it, he behoved either to
discover himself, or depart. — The M'Kenzies are said to
be descended from this chief.

DUCHOIL's ELEGY. 153

got by the voice of mid-night tale *. The
found of their fame shall mingle with the clouds
that roll behind thee. Their tombs shall rear
their gray heads, and wage a contest with the
blasts of other winters. The hunter will view
the chace from their tops. The stag will shun
the storm near them. The stranger will view
them and sigh. The fame of the valiant shall
travel to other lands.

But the little soul shall vanish, like the
fleeting cloud, that wanders among the twink-
ling

* The mid-night tales here alluded to, are those rehearsed
at late-wakes to entertain the people who sit up with the
corpse. The desire of hearing those poems, draws together
the inhabitants, from a great way round, who are so
much captivated with the compositions, that they behold,
with reluctance, the approach of morning. This cu-
stom owes its origin to the bards, who were wont, on
such occasions, to relate the actions of the deceased.
Hence, it became customary, on the death of such per-
sons as were not entitled to eulogiums, to sing the deeds
of antient heroes; and, as the audience naturally retained
what had made such a deep impression on the mind, it
has fortunately proved the great means of preserving
some of the sublimest poems in the Galic language from
the womb of oblivion.

154 DUCHOIL's ELEGY.

ling stars. It shakes its misty garment on the mountains. The course of a blast is towards it. Frightened at the fury of the wind, it disappears, and its dim form is no more remembered. The fair-haired morning shall rejoice in the east, and shall not meet it: The sun shall smile in the face of heaven, and shall not behold it.

Lately we looked, and, behold! the chief of Shirar strode in his might. The armour of his battles was near him. His strength was the shield of the feeble; his hall was the home of strangers †. The sons of other lands tasted

† If the reader is inclined to compare an antient to some modern chiefs, he may peruse the following lines translated from Dugal Bawn, composed about the time of the late emigration to America.

The pale-fac'd tenant of your cottage hears,
With heart-felt grief, the tales of other years.
What tho' his noble sire, with sword and shield,
Procur'd him freedom in the bloody field;
What tho' the father's arm the battle won?
No comfort reaches to the wretched son.
His much-lov'd wife and infants, pale thro' want,
Demand that succour which he cannot grant.
The youthful group around the mother hings,
And craves relief from hunger's piercing stings.

The

7 DUCHOIL'S ELEGY. 155

tasted his friendship : His fame traveled over many seas.—But this day's sun bears witness to a change, and has seen his fall, like the mighty oak, which had long shaken its bushy head above the forest. The ax of the hewer came in the day of its strength, and laid its spreading branches on the ground. Fly now unrestrained, noisy blast ! No tall trunk rears its stately head to oppose thy rapid journey. Death came like a dark cloud from the north, that hides the sun behind its sable wings. The hills around are sad : The vallies mourn beneath

The mournful fair, with anguish, hears their cries,
The big tear gushing from her streaming eyes.
The trembling sons of woe perform in haste
Their rapid journey down her swan-like breast.
Her last-born suckling sips the briny flood,
And drinks grief's offspring with the milky food.
Sighs fought with words, and stopt their passage long,
While half-form'd accents perish'd on her tongue.
But fault'ring words at last made good their way.
O tho', &c.

The subject here becomes religious, which, in Galic poetry, is seldom worthy of imitation, as they received their system of it from a class of men who are no ways famed for liberal sentiments.

156 DUCHOIL'S ELEGY.

beneath its frowns. The liquid plains cease to glitter. The red deer couches below the elbow of the rock. Silence is in the wood. The feathered people shun the drop beneath the spreading leaves. The hound shakes his ears, and fills the footsteps of the home-bound hunter.

Many were the streaming eyes that viewed thy entrance into the narrow house, thou chief of battles!—Weep, ye maids of woody Fuarven! Mourn, ye youths of the hill of hinds! The chief of the people is low.

Who shall lead us in the day of strife? Where is the shield of our safety, when the foe appears?—The head of the glens is low: Feeble are the people without a leader.

Who is she that wanders with distracted steps on the mountains? What dark eye gives the tear of woe to the wind? What hand of snow strews the long dishevelled hair on the bosom of the breeze? What white bosom heaves to the blast in sorrow, and calls in vain to her hunter?—Who, but the daughter of generous Garven, could display such charms?

thy words are piercing. Other clans dwell in safety under their chiefs; but the arm of our strength is low.

SUL.

scription of it to be beyond his reach. He therefore leaves his audience to form to themselves this affecting scene. To a superficial reader, therefore, the most valuable passages must be lost, as they require a strenuous exertion of attention to which few will perhaps think them entitled.

No species of composition leaves greater room for the imagination to work upon, than the Celtic poetry. The bards were a class of men who became venerable from their gray hairs, as well as respectable from their profession. Destitute of every aid which literature furnishes for the improvement of the mind, they were under the necessity of gathering their knowledge from experience. Although this be the most infallible, it is by no means the most expeditious method of acquiring it; and a life must be far spent before much acquisition can be made. For this reason, the bards always appear old men. Thus, adorned with locks worn gray in the service of their country, and surrounded by some of those who had been witnesses to the achievements of their youth, they delivered their sentiments, with that dignity of style, and freedom of expression, which a mind conscious of its own superiority naturally claims; and mankind received whatever they advanced, without presuming to exercise the talents of criticism.

SULVINA's ELEGY.

COME forth, sigh of woe. Roll down,
tears of grief. Mourn the fall of the
lovely. Bathe the memory of the white-
armed daughter of Morauld.

Why doth the wandering stream smile as
it passeth? Why doth the finny tribe sport
in the crystal flood? Roll in darkness, ye
glittering waves! Retire to the blackest pool,
ye silver-winged!

Sound no horn on my hills, ye followers of
the stag! Spare the hide of the roe, ye bear-
ers of the bow!

Nod your green heads in grief, ye leafy
daughters of the forest! Sing a tale of woe,
ye tenants of the bush!

Why dost thou travel in thy mildness, soft
breath of summer? The fairest flower that ever
met thee is low. The friendship of the
breeze shall no more smile on the cheek of the
rose. The waving ringlets of her dark-brown
hair

hair shall no more tremble on the wings of the passing blast.

Away with thy voice of mirth, joyful morning ! She, who was wont to shine before thy early beams, shall not awake. Hang your drooping heads, ye flowers of the mead ! A furly blast has plucked the fairest lily from her stalk. Lonely is her dwelling in the gloomy tomb. The sun-beams of coming years shall not smile on her virgin-charms.

But come, O come, with all thy fable clouds, black-robed night ! Grasp the hills in thy dark bosom. Let the shrieks of ghosts, the screams of owls, and the course of meteors, be around me. Let the strength of the angry blast bear me on its wings ; and let the spirits of the wind hum their tales of woe in my ear.

Come forth from thy narrow dwelling in the land of graves, thou beam that was lovely. Why didst thou retire in the midst of thy blooming years, like the midnight star, that rushes behind a dark cloud ? The mariners home is near its bed in the western waves. His eager eyes search for it in vain among the
boisterous

SULVINA's ELEGY. 161

boisterous billows, and blustering blasts of stormy night; but he finds it not.

Why dost thou pour the beams of thy kindness around me, bright queen of night? The friendship of thy smiles brings no joy to me. More welcome are the frowns of grizzly ghosts, the tremendous voice of bursting clouds, or the furly aspect of the wrathful storm! Away with thy glaring light, insulting moon! Hide thyself among the dark folds of nightly clouds. Never shall your smiles call forth Sulvina from the hall: Never shall your silent beams dance round her graceful shadow. The form of her who was lovely shall no more wander along the rustling heath.

The meeting of warriors is in the hall of Morauld; but the voice of mirth is not there. No white fingers are seen among the trembling strings. Mute is the harp. Loud are the sighs. What eye can refuse a tear to the lovely!

A cloud has darkened the valley at noon. The sun-beam of my joy is set, no more to return. My eyes shall never more behold its
coming

162 SULVINA'S ELEGY.

coming forth from the back of the eastern hill.

Then, come, raven-haired night ! with all thy black clouds. Spread thy drousy wings over the inhabitants of the forest ; and let the tenants of the cottage pursue their blissful dreams among the visionary mountains that rise near the couch of their slumbers :— But talk not of sleep to me, gloomy night ; My breast is the house of woe. Tho' thou rulest in darkness over the children of nature, I regard thee not. Wilt thou thyself rest, when the all-lightening sun shakes his white-locks in the east : Wilt thou presume to combat the coming forth of his beauty ?—No : Thou fliest in haste with thy gathered clouds ; and the wretched only mourn thy departure.

Where is the course of thy journey, black cloud ? Rush in haste from thy dwelling in the sky. Bring thy hundred ghosts among the dark folds of thy misty garments. Let the bending oaks and the falling rocks proclaim thy approach. Bear me on the wings of thy strength : Bear me over boisterous seas,

SULVINA's ELEGY. 163

to distant isles, where the souls of the lovely
rejoice before the sun-beams of eternal day.

Do thou, Sulvina, meet me with the sweetest
of thy smiles. Stretch forth thy white hand
from the soft robes of thy misty cloud. Look
on me in kindness; and, let the mildest beams
of thy sparkling eyes fly round me like the
breath of summer. Be the pillar of my wan-
dering steps to the isle of peace.—Let me
taste thy friendship in a land unknown.

ORAN.

ORAN-MOLLA*

NO joy is mine in the absence of the maid
of love. The white bosoms of a hundred
virgins meet the sun-beams on the banks of
Cormic: But thy equal, matchless maid of
the rolling eye! is not there. Thy smiles
are

* Oran-Molla, a *song of praise*—It was to this poem
that the music was first composed, which, in the end
of the last century, became well known in the low
countries by the name of Killicranky. Some other
pieces in this collection are set to music, which the
Lowlanders consider as originally their own, and which
the partiality of some, and the ignorance of others, have as-
cribed to the invention of an Italian. This makes it
more than probable, that most of the Scots tunes have
been composed by the Celtic bards, and entirely over-
throws that ridiculous opinion, which has lately pre-
vailed, that the best of them were done by the unfortu-
nate

are as the glances of the fire of brightness,
when he rides in meridian splendor over the
mountains. Thy words as the voice of many
harps, when the songs of bards are heard, and
their fingers travel among the trembling
strings.

Thou art distant far, maid of Cormic ! But
dark mountains raise their cliffy heads be-
tween us in vain. Mine eyes shall never cease
to view the image of the lovely. My thoughts
shall wander round the crouding beauties that
attend thee.

The eager eyes of a hundred warriors are
towards the captivating charms, which a-
dorn the swelling surface of thy rising bosom †.

X

The

nate Rizzio, so late as the time of Queen Mary ; who,
if he did any thing, can only be allowed the merit of
making a few variations, and adding second parts, which
the sets that are known in the Highlands generally want.
There are, however, about a dozen of the best flow
tunes that have no antient poem set to them in the
Galic language. If ever there were any, as most pro-
bably there has, the overwhelming waves of time have
buried them in oblivion.

† The Galic reader will here perceive a want. The
translator has designedly left out the warm description
which

The fairest lily that shines in the forest, contends not with the sweetness of its smiles ; and, when it meets the sun-beams at noon, the swan is ashamed of her downy breast, and hides it beneath the rising wave.

Thy

which the bard has given of ' the two white hills raising
' their soft heads on the bosom of the virgin, like two bright
' sun-beams, when, smiling, they steal thro' the mist of
' Arden, to bless the bewildered traveller.' Tho' every sentence in the original is perfectly consistent with the most rigid rules of delicacy ; yet, as the bard has described his mistress's bosom a few inches lower than the ladies are pleased to expose theirs at present, the translator shall not presume to lead the readers imagination where the delicate fair will not indulge his sight.

A bard, in the last century, mentions the cause of covering the bosom as a female imposition. I shall translate the passage, not as a fact, but merely to show what injuries the fair-sex have suffered in all ages, from the capricious humours, and suspicious dispositions of the males.

The virtuous mothers of our fires deceiv'd
No youthful hero with a cover'd breast.
When virgin-purity corrupted fled,
The slacken'd breasts confess'd the secret sin.
But their fair daughters, by the aid of art,
Affecting shame unknown to innocence,
Pretend to hide, in veil of gaudy lawn,
A bosom spotless for the nuptial bed.

Imagination

Thy delicate fingers trace not in vain the folds of the lawn. Thy needle gives birth to the spreading tree, that seems to bend beneath the load of mellow fruit *.—But stretch, lovely maid ! stretch forth thy hand in kindness to me, and I shall breathe, in reality, that life which the sons of thy needle but seem to enjoy. Let the friendship of thy eyes shine around me, and I will flourish before their

Imagination wanders in the dark,
And magnifies with greed the hidden store,
Which seeming modestly hoards up with care.—
Deceived lovers ! fighting for a breast,
Which conscious guilt conceals from public view !

* The ladies were the only artists in this way, among the Caledonians, as well as the Greeks, and other antient nations. Instances of this, among the latter, must be obvious to every learned reader, not to mention any of our more recent ancestors.

And aprons set wi' mony a dyce
Of neidil-wark se rair,
Wove be ne hand, as ze may guess,
Saif that of Fairly fair.

But the *Bratach*, or standard, was the usual field in which the efforts of female genius were displayed ; and there have been instances, in the knight-errant strain, of warriors falling in love with ladies, whom they had never seen, from the beautiful execution of these standards.

their beams, like the vegetable tribes that rear their tender heads beneath the kindly breath of summer.

Who shall convey to song the form of the maid who moves, matchless, over the mountains? Her smooth neck is the white bed of her golden tresses. Her flowing ringlets fall in sweet disorder over her ivory shoulders *. Soft blue eyes roll beneath a small round arch. Warriors melt before the strength of their beams !

Move on in thy majestic steps, maid of the mild-rolling eye ! The blooming heath shall meet

* The whole of this poem has sunk to an unaccountable degree of poverty in the present translation, and this passage in a particular manner. The words *Bachlach*, *dualach*, *casbhui*, &c. which astonish the Galic reader with their energy and poetical beauties, are altogether lost, as the English contains no term capable of expressing either of them. It must be acknowledged, that this language may express any sentiment that arises in the mind ; but the beauties of a poem do not often depend so much on the sentiment, as the manner of expressing it. Nothing, therefore, but the sentiment can be preserved in the translation, as the genius of the two languages is so different, and as the Galic contains some thousands of words not to be found in the English.

meet thy graceful shadow in gladness: The verdant plains shall wave their grassy locks, and smile as it passeth. Grace is in thy presence. Thy breath is as the scent of a flowery garden, when it pours its sweet odours on the wings of the breeze.

The tongue of thy songs is surrounded by the white formers of the ivory ring *. The sound
of

* What is here translated, *white formers of the ivory ring*, stands in the original *Deud, Gealdb*; a term to which no word in the English language bears the smallest affinity. When such terms occur, the translation must undoubtedly lose all the beauties of the original.

Deud signifies a graceful assemblage of refined objects, whose perfections astonish the beholders, and excite the most agreeable sensations; a term applied by the Celtic bards to the fine set teeth of the ladies.

A few remarks on this passage will contribute to support the truth of an assertion, which the translator has formerly presumed to advance; That the Galic, even in its present uncultivated state, displays a luxuriant richness of poetical terms, incomparably superior to any of the modern languages.

The care which the ladies of our days take to have the avenue leading to their gentle stomachs adorned with a proper set of ivory centinels, leaves no room to doubt, but
these

of thy voice is like the music of the wood,
when the feathery tribes rejoice among the
rustling leaves.

O thou

these champions do great execution in the day of battle. A troop, which has so often distinguished itself in the cause of the fair, ought then by no means to be forgot, when the triumphs of their victories are rehearsing; yet poetry, which pretends to do justice to every member and minute feature of the victorious beauty, has, with unpardonable negligence, suffered the teeth to sleep without their fame, while the actions of the eyes, lips, chin, &c. are magnified by repeated eulogiums.

From this general censure, however, impartiality will compel every intelligent reader to except the Celtic bards. In their most antient poems, we meet with the most beautiful poetical terms, that the nervous exertion of rhetoric could invent, to express the symmetry, whiteness, &c. of the ladies teeth. But it must be owned, that the English language will not admit of any poetical fallies on this subject, till some new terms be received. The word *teeth* is harsh, and may be used with success to describe any disgusting object, as a witch, a tyger, &c. but can never be admitted with any grace in the delineation of beauty.

Did the Galic furnish no other name for teeth than *fuchel*, the bards would have laboured under the same disadvantage. But as *those* that grimly grin in the face of an old hagg, and *these* that sweetly smile behind the vermillion

O thou who formest those excellencies which captivate the enraptured eyes of men ! this is the work of thy hand ; and we feel the strength of its power *. What, then, must be thy own perfections, since the object that starts into existence at thy nod, is thus beautifully formed !

Hide not thy fair head in the heathy mountains, bright son of heaven ! Lonely is my seat on the hill of roes. The maid of the yellow locks is distant far : The hall of her fathers rises on the banks of Cormic, and many gloomy hills intervene.—But thou hearest me not, bright-haired traveller of the sky ! Thy own course has been over many hills to the bed of thy rest ; and why have not I reached the dwelling of the maid ?—But reach it I will, O sun ! though not with a speed like thine.

Why do ye fly, ye deers, with all your swiftness over the heath ? No hostile steps are mine.

No

million lips of a youthful beauty, are certainly not similar objects ; why should the bards, who were endued with the power of inventing, and the liberty of applying terms, give them the same appellation ?—

* The bard appears by this exclamation to have been acquainted with the true religion.

No parent of death glitters in my hand.—My speed is towards the white arms of beauty. They are seen, like two sun-beams, in the hall of the chief of Cormic.

Raise, daughter of night ! raise thy fair head in the east : Be the guide of my lonely journey over the dusky mountains.

Fall softly, thou noisy stream ! Steal down thy rocks in silence. The shaggy tenants of the forest are asleep : Awake them not. The hunter sits far distant from his home. The gleam of half-extinguished oaks is before him : Two faithful dogs are his shield behind. He slumbers by times on the heath ; then wakes, and waits with impatience the first smiles of the morning.

When shall the hall of Cormic rear its lofty head before me ?—Travel softly on your airy wings, ye winds that approach it ! The white armed daughter of beauty is in the midst of her slumbers. Blow kindly, O breath of night ! on the chambers of her rest ; this is the season of her dreams.—Perhaps my image is seen among the children of her sleep.—Son of fancy, speak softly to the maid. Tell her my sighs
are

are loud on the mountains: My groans are frequent on the hill of winds. My hounds look mournfully in my face, and wonder at the cause. They howl at my feet, and turn their wishful eyes by times to the hill of deers.— But ye look in vain, ye pursuers of the wind! the chace has no charms for me. The maid of the breast of snow is distant far, and no joy meets me on the mountains.

Though lonely, I wander by the stream, though mournful, my sigh mingles with the wind of the desert; the favour of thy bright eyes, fair maid, would cheer me, as the sun the hills, when he pours forth the strength of his beauty at noon, and shakes the snow from their heathy locks.

Y

T H E

T H E

WORDS OF WOE*.

VOICE of the tale, move thou at the nod
of grief, and let the words of woe be
heard in the breath of the song.

Many have been the former stings which
have pierced my wounded breast. These have
increased the paleness of my drooping face,
and thinned the ringlets of my falling hair.
But other hardships appear now as nothing,
and former miseries vanish before the present
blow.—

Mournful are the feelings of my wounded
breast. Son of the stranger! thy tear would
fall,

* This poem is the composition of a lady on the death
of her husband, and has been much admired in the ori-
ginal. Some of the best pieces in the Galic, both in the
pastoral and elegiac strain, have been the productions of
the fair-sex.

fall, couldst thou behold them. The mighty have fallen by the arm of death: The sword of affliction has pierced my heart. My tears bathe not the memory of the feeble. Grace and greatness were in the steps of him whose fall I mourn. He who was high among surrounding chiefs, is now the humble tenant of the peaceful grave. In vain I search for my hunter among his rocks and his woods: In vain I raise my voice among the hills of his chace. Echo answers; but he is silent. His dogs also pursue his former footsteps; but they return without him. Early in the morning they visit the chambers of his sleep; but he is not there.—I cannot ease your grief, faithful sons of swiftness! but I will join your mourning. My tears will be seen: Your moans will be heard. The stranger as he passeth will ask the cause. The tongue of information will answer, ‘Because the mighty are low;—Because the chief of Ascar is lonely in the gloomy tomb. His wife and hounds mourn his fall. All day they shun the light: The windows of the hall are shut. No open door is there to receive the traveller as he passeth; otherwise

the

the hand of invitation and the shell of friendship * had been held forth to thee, and thou hadst departed no stranger to the joys of the feast.—No wonder that the voice of woe is heard; for the chief that is low was mighty. He was fierce in the battle: He was swift in the chace: He was mild at the feast.

Stop—son of the feeble voice! Who art thou that attempts to speak the deeds of the chief?

* The moderns are divided in their conjectures concerning the materials from which the antient Caledonians extracted the liquors which they drank out of the shells so often mentioned in their poetry. This liquor does not appear to have been strong; for we never hear of any person being intoxicate by it. According to the best accounts, there were three kinds of it. The simplest and most ordinary drink was extracted from a delicate kind of heath, known at present by the name of *Frenob heath*; the next in quality from *juniper berries*, and their wine from the *birch*. The two last are used at present; but it is said there was a secret method of extracting ale from the heath, which is now altogether lost. The loss of this supposed secret, however, seems to have been occasioned by no other cause than the invention of malt liquor; and our moderate ancestors might have been perfectly happy with an entertainment, which our more refined palates would by no means relish.

chief? Have not I heard the secret feelings of his breast, when the words of the valiant came from his mouth?—Yet I am silent. Didst thou know the hero better than I; or is thy tongue the parent of more piercing words? Thine eyes have never shed the tears of anguish:—Thy sigh has never issued from a wounded heart.

Visage of danger! display not thy threatening brows on our mountains: He who was first to meet thee is low. The sword of the valiant is here; but where is the arm of strength?—Son of the little soul unsheath it not. Let not the sword of the mighty meet disgrace in the hands of the feeble; lest the warrior of the distant land should carry it to the hall of his fathers, and say to the maid of his love, 'Feel the grist of the handle, and the length of the blade.—Strong was the arm of him who grasped the parent of death; but he sank before me.'—Maid of the distant land believe it not.——

O land of ghosts! residence of every friend of mine! is there no room in your nightly chambers for me?—O chief of Aascar! thy
hall

178 THE WORDS OF WOE.

hall has often given rest to the weary; and will thy narrow dwelling refuse to admit the wife of thy youth?—She who was wont to rejoice when the departing sun saluted the western hill; because her hunter returned at night. He returned in the strength of his beauty. His panting hounds came before; his loaded followers behind. She who waited thy coming at Crayemore, whose breast glowed at thy approach, calls:—Wilt thou not hear.—Speak, ye tenants of the grave! Your cries will be sweet unto me. The husband of my youth, the father of my children, is amongst you; he will protect me.—But no children are mine. They also walk before the moon without a shadow*.—Why so merciless to me, O grave! Thou hast wained from me the affections of those whom my breast has suckled; and wilt thou not permit them to answer me in kindness?

Chief

* The antients were perfectly convinced, that, although the ghosts of deceased persons wandered abroad, their bodies still remained in the grave. With very good reason, therefore, they concluded, that, where there was no substance, there could be no shadow.

THE WORDS OF WOE. 179

Chief of Ascar!—thou who wast great among the mighty, wilt thou not hear?—Other ghosts roam abroad in the season of darkness: The sons of the feeble fly in haste; but I fly not thee. Thy grim ghost has no terrors for me. I search for thee among the dim shades of night; but I cannot find thee. The whirlwind is heard as it passeth; but thy voice is not there. The full orb'd moon is in the east: The polished surface of the lake glitters below. Smooth are her steps along the half-darkened arch.—But thou smilest in vain, daughter of night! The children of the den sleep, regardless of thy beams. The sons of the cottage also pursue their peaceful dreams! No shadow moves before thee, but the wretched Lesbana. She mourns the fall of her husband. Her voice is heard among the clouds of night; but he hears her not. She inquires for her hunter; but the sons of the rock return her own words for answer.—

O thou moon! to whom the trembling stars nod in obedience in the season of sleep; thou hast often travelled thy journey through the sky.

sky. The wretched have often mourned before thee; and thou hast poured forth thy light on the mountains to comfort them. Thou permittest the inhabitants of the tomb to come forth, and leave their shadows behind. Thou shuttest the eyes of the children of day in sleep, and the hills are left free to the tenants of the grave. Why then are they not abroad?—Is my tear not big? do they not see it? Is my sigh not loud? do they not hear it?—Why then do they not answer to the voice of my grief?

Spouse of my youth! shall I taste the sweets of sleep, while the rude breath of night dashes against thy tomb in the land of graves?—No, farly blast! thou shalt not tell in other lands, that thou rushed over the tomb of the mighty, and that no soft locks rose on thy wings as thou passed. The dwelling of the hero, though narrow, shall not be unmarked. The sons of the stranger will view the stone of his fame in the season of the sun. When the course of the moon is abroad, Lesbana will mourn at his tomb. No cloud shall roll without a sigh:

No

No blast shall pass without a portion of her falling hair. The virgins will seize it, and cry,
 ' Whence is thy journey of woe, soft-waving lock !'

Pleasant art thou to Lesbana, as thou wanderest from cloud to cloud, broad-faced ruler of the night ! Sweet is thy aspect as thou lookest forth in all the mildness of thy beauty, when the smile of joy is on both thy cheeks. The twinkling stars diminish in thy presence, and shrink by times behind the covert of their misty clouds.

But raise not the voice of thy mirth in the east, fair-haired morning ! Shake not the ringlets of thy beauty before me. Go to her who has lost no lover, who comes forth from the hall when night spreads her dusky wing over the mountains. Her seat is beneath the rustling of an oak. Her variegated garment flutters in the blast : She gathers her scattered locks from the wind. Earnest is the rolling of two blue stars below her soft brows. Her white arm is the pillar of her leaning cheek. She looks with expectation's eye to the hill of the chace.

Often may the return of thy hunter bless
 thy soft eyes, daughter of joy ! But never shall
 a beam of mirth smile on the cheek of Lef-
 bana. Her locks shall travel on many winds.
 A blast shall soon mix her with the dust. A
 stranger will raise the tomb of her who had
 no son, whose hunter sank by the arm of
 death.—Every virgin that passeth will give a
 stone *. Often will the cry be heard, ‘ Peace
 ‘ round the tomb of the mournful !’

THE

* It is a custom at this day among the Highlanders, as
 they pass, to throw a stone into a *cairn*, which is always
 made at the place where any particular misfortune or
 death has happened. By this means, these monuments,
 instead of diminishing, always increase ; and several very
 large ones are to be seen in different parts of Scotland.

THE

APPROACH of SUMMER.

MY wandering fancy returned from the pursuit of visions, as the enlightened vale proclaimed the approach of the sun. I started from the inactive couch of repose. The crystal dew trembled upon the bosom of the yielding grass along the reclining surface of the pregnant plain. The sweet voice of the pipe saluted my ear, and the aged rocks returned their approbation of the harmonious notes.

The

† This poem was composed by a gentleman of universal knowledge, about forty years ago. He attempted, in other compositions, to introduce the beauties of the Greek and Roman poets into the Galic language. But, as he entered too warmly into the political controversy of his time, his works, in general, must be excluded from a translation. The reader, from this specimen, however will readily perceive the superiority of native genius, unassisted by any other qualification, over the self-sufficient knowledge of literature, and the little embellishments of art.

184 THE APPROACH of SUMMER.

The birch sent forth infant branches thro' the opening jaws of the disjointed rock. The blue mist of the morning leaned on the bushes which adorned the brow of the hill; but it fled the approach of the ascending sun, whose friendly beams smiled upon the half-formed daughter of the feeble twig.

Sweet is the beauty which adorns thy spreading leaves, smiling primrose of the grateful hue! Thou art the most courageous warrior of the vegetable race. While other flowers are buried in the bosom of the earth, faint-hearted sons of the tender roots, thy steps are forward to combat the breath of the still-subsisting cold. Clothed in the armour of thy beauty, thou art the earliest jewel that adorns the brow of the infant spring.

The spreading roots of trees extend their pasture through the hidden bowels of the earth, in search of enriching draughts to increase the strength of the stately plant. With impartial justice, the trunk distributes the ascending juice through each twisting vein. Her grateful offspring spread the leafy garments round the parent of their wealth;
and

THE APPROACH OF SUMMER. 185

and the thrush, enfolded in their skirts, pours forth the harmonious song in the bosom of the morning. Every member of the vocal concert flies to the collecting branches of the wood. Their little breasts are flushed with joy at the approaching light. A hundred voices from the thickest thorn, proclaim the welcome of the infant day. The voice of the little wren is mingled in the general sound; and the red-breasted songster is heard on the outmost verge of the projecting branch.

O glorious fountain of light ! bright daughter of the east, welcome is thy northward journey to the wishing eyes of nature and her sons. The hills, robbed by the surly breath of winter of the garments with which thou lately clothed them, spread forth their shivering bosoms before thee with seeming complaints, and solicit thy chearing aid to heal the wounds of the frosty blast.—They petition not in vain. The darting arrows of thy beams defeat the efforts of the retiring cold.

The collecting veins of the rill swell with the rapid descent of the melting snow. And, by thy majestic presence, every gloom which
frowned

frowned on the surface of the earth, trembling, disappears. Fly, congealing foe of increase; the united sons of nature shall assemble to rejoice in your absence; the little daisies, eager to partake of the smiles of summer, start from behind their green curtain, and present themselves clad in golden charms of infant purity. Early herbs are clothed in the livery of the spring; and the roving bee, bewildered in choice, tastes the riches of every flower, and joyfully hums amidst surrounding wealth.

The admiring eyes of the traveller are lost among the crowding beauties of the variegated plains; and his ears are ravished with the voice of harmony and love. The joys of nature still increase; for now the ascending sun, with uniform pace, has gained the summit of the azure arch, and drives the shadow of the high-erected hills from the enlightened bottom of the hollow glens. The feathered tenant of the bush, with joy beholds the welcome change, and pours the melodious offspring of his warbling throat on the bosom of expanded light. No cloud of furlly aspect travels on the top of the mountains, to intercept

THE APPROACH OF SUMMER. 187

cept the favours of the bountiful sun, or silence the music of the choral bands.

The words of paternal love are in the breath of the herds, as they disperse in search of the flowery pasture. The green-covered plains round the thickest grove, smile under their increasing wealth, and invite the straggling flocks to taste the richness of their luxuriant crop.

Sweet are the words of thy music, and beautiful the varying garment of thy pride, lovely warbler of the quick-moving eye! Thy seat is on the loftiest branch of the towering oak of many years, whose strong-jointed trunk has long withstood the breath of the blustering blast. Her dwelling is not on the top of the barren hill: She collects the riches of her strength by the side of the fertile stream, on the brow of the verdant vale.

The animating breath of the sun calls forth a thousand herbs from the prolific womb of the pregnant plain; opening flowers are surrounded by leaves projecting from the bending stalk; and every species of the vegetable tribe shines in its gayest garments along the joyful glen. Sweet is the scent of the
flowery

188 THE APPROACH OF SUMMER.

flowery plain which surrounds the bottom of the erected rock ; the spreading roses shake their leaves upon the waving stalk before the friendly breeze ; with joy they taste the welcome embrace. But their nod is on the top of a more extended stalk, whose moist dwelling is on the fertile bosom of the fruitful mead.

The gentle lily, soft emblem of virgin purity, with unaffected grace, adorns the hollow of the mountains that gradually form the curve along the twisting verge of the descending rill. Her decent robes are not the work of ostentatious gaudy fingers ; her modest looks are from the pale garments of the white leaf, near the shade of the rising bush, where the morning often finds the roe, ere he starts from his couch of rest.

Now the herds repair to the well-known fold, to have their udders eased of the milky load. Their voice is joined with the shepherd's pipe to quicken the steps of the dairy nymphs : Welcome are their presence to the expecting flocks, who listen attentive to the quivering song.

Darting through the yielding stream, the stately salmon cleaves with ease a passage. His
speed

THE APPROACH OF SUMMER. 189

speed is from the strength of his finny wings, as he pursues the course of the unwary fly, whose shortened life perishes within his opening jaws. The son of the flood springs with joy along the liquid plains; the variegated scales of his sparkling side and silver wings, wantonly sport along the crystal stream.

Flushed with the joys of conjugal love, the wood-cock, from the spreading tree, takes his airy flight to the less masculine cover of the heathy plain; with watchful looks he rears his waving crest above the slender branches of the heath; his steps are in search of the coy charmer of his breast, whose half-inviting distant notes he eagerly pursues with joyful flight; with majestic grace he shakes the varying colour of his swelling pride, and solicits the friendly glances of the female eye, while the spreading wing invites her to the warm embrace. Fly not the arms of thy lover, daughter of the heath; this is the nuptial season of the feathered tribe: Every tender pair taste the pleasures of love in the heathy locks of the surrounding hills. The joys of nature, without interruption, be thy portion, sprightly daughter of the

A a

nimble

190 THE APPROACH OF SUMMER.

nimble eye ! thy grateful lover will remain faithful to the charmer of his breast ; he will yet provide thee food, and cheer thy heart with melodious notes from the distant tree, when thou spreadest thy motherly wings o'er the tenants of the nest ; and, with the animating kindness of thy speckled bosom, warm into existence a feeble crew, the feathered sons of the shell.

Thus, fed by the liberal hand of nature, pass ye the day, sweet tuned warblers, until the dark cloud of night from the east prepares to supplant the departing light. Then let the children of the wood strain every muscle, and pour forth the choice offspring of their throats, to solicit the speedy return of departing light.

The theme ceased ; let silence ensue ; and, let the little bushes open their hospitable gates to receive their nightly guests.

T H E

T H E

AN TI ENT CHIEF*.

HAPPY the bard who sung in former days,
When Albin heard with joy her heroes
praise;

When her sons rush'd with courage to the fields,
Where echoing rocks proclaim'd the noise of
shields.

Her warrior, when the sheath receiv'd his sword,
Tasted each blessing which its edge secur'd.

His chief was ruler only to defend
The weak from insults, and make tyrants bend;

To

* This poem, a translation of which appeared some time ago in a periodical publication, was composed by CALLUM RUADH, a bard still alive in the Highlands, in the time of the late emigration to America. It is here inserted, not so much on account of its merit, as to show the present taste of the Highland poetry, and to represent the hardships which many of the inhabitants of that country suffer from the tyrannical *viceroys* of some chiefs.

192 THE ANTIENT CHIEF.

To cheer the aged and instruct the young,
 To hear each contest and redress each wrong.
 At his tribunal open were the laws,
 No substitute was hir'd to plead the cause;
 A guardian to his clan he pass'd his days,
 The first in danger, but the last in ease.
 His arm secur'd his people in the field,
 The feeble rested safe behind his shield;
 Beneath his hand the weak did never fall;
 The sons of want found plenty in his hall;
 The stranger there might uninvited come,
 And taste each comfort which he left at home:
 Free to the traveller was the daily feast,
 And the foe always perish'd in the guest.

Thrice happy bards who sung of chiefs like
 these!

Your works have always met deserved praise;
 The grateful sons of Gael have nurs'd your fame,
 And distant ages will rever your name:
 Each eye shall soften at your lofty song,
 Which ne'er shall sink but with the Galic
 tongue*.

Not

* The Galic is the only name the Highlanders have for their own language. Their neighbours in the south, however, have not been idle in inventing others, as *Irish* and *Erse*. Even the Highlanders themselves, when they talk

Not so the guilty chief of modern days,
Unknown to virtue, and inur'd to ease;

He,

of it in the low countries, distinguish it by the appellation by which it is best understood there.

The Rev. Mr Whitaker, whose assertions I have formerly presumed to combat, concludes this to be a sufficient demonstration that the Scots are of Irish extraction. As this affair is of some consequence in a controverted point of history, the reader will not, perhaps, be displeased to see the authorities on which this reverend historian proceeds, examined. ‘The Caledonians, who were reduced by the Scots of Er-in, or Ireland, having adopted the appellation of their conquerors; the nation and the country being now universally denominated Scots and Scotland; the nation being expressly denominated Hibernia, as late as the 11th century, and the people the Irischery, as late as the 14th, and their dialect of the British being *invariably* entitled the Ir-ish, or Er-se, to the present moment.’

Whitaker's hist. page 292.

So far is the language of the Highlands from ‘being *invariably* entitled Ir-ish, or Er-se,’ at this, or any former period, that not one instance can be found of its having ever been termed by either of these names by the natives, until they come abroad, and learn it from strangers. But this extract is supported by a quotation from a respectable author of the last century, and has the following note.

‘Irwin in his hist. Scot. nomenclatura, 1682, p. 6. says,
‘Our isle-men and Highlanders are very oft named Hiberni

He, void of pity, hears the wretched moan,
And human nature give a gen'ral groan.—

With

berni by strangers ;—and, *at this day*, the English and our lowlanders call and count them Irish.

When Mr Whitaker entered on the present controversy with James Macpherson, Esq; he set out with professions of candour, which could not fail of anticipating the favourable opinion of every reader of liberal sentiments. His expressions are beautiful, and seem to bear the genuine marks of sincerity.—‘Disdaining the little artifices of controversy, too honourable, I hope, to create the faults that I cannot find, and too candid, I trust, to urge strongly the mere failings of humanity,’ &c.

Can we imagine the author of sentiments which do honour to human nature, capable of forgetting that respect due to himself, and prostituting his superior talents, by committing the most despicable piece of forgery that ever disgraced the meanest controversy. Candour and humanity forbid the ungenerous suspicion ; but justice calls aloud on the austerity of truth, and confirms the fact.

From the following genuine quotation from the passage referred to, the reader will see what justice Mr Whitaker has done to his authority, and, from thence, may perceive what degree of credit is due to his most positive assertions.

‘*Albinensis Scotia, et Albinenses Scoti*, the country of Albin, and the Scots that possess it in Britain ; For Ireland was never called *Scotia*, nor its inhabitants *Scoti-Hibernenses* ; though some *strangers* have been ever-easy to believe the monkish ridiculous fable of the Irish,

With grief he loads the wretched sons of care,
And thousands starve that he may sumptuous
fare.

While I'm condemn'd to sing of chiefs like
these,
My works shall neither meet nor merit praise :
No

Irish, who affirm that *Ireland* was called *Scotia Major*, and they were called *Scoti Hibernenses*. The ground of the mistake was, That they thought both people might be as well called *Scots*, as (Gaelick) *Galæci*. The truth is, the *Irish* are never called *Scots* in any authentic author. But our *Isle-men* and *Highlanders* are very often named *Hiberni* by strangers; both from their west situation, from their original, being come of the same *Gaelicks* in *Spain*, and from their language, and divers of their customs, all common with the *Irish*. And, at this day, the *English* and our *lowlanders*, call and count them *Irish*, for the foresaid reasons.' *Irwin's hist. Scot. Nomencl.* p. 6.

From faults thus created, and from authorities thus perverted, does the reverend author conclude his extended remarks, in the loftiest strain of encomiums on his own abilities, that ever issued from a pen, elevated to an uncommon degree by the complimenting voice of self-approbation. Had Mr Whitaker avoided all reference to the Celtic language, these eulogiums to his own talents had been less liable to censure. In other respects, he displays the ingenuity of a penetrating critic, and every where discovers an extensive knowledge of ancient history.

196 THE ANTIENT CHIEF.

No bard shall found them on the trembling string.
My words shall perish, and the names I sing.

In vain, alas ! I tempt the lyric art,
With pointleſs words that reach not to the heart :
How ſhall I virtues which exiſt not, draw,
Or ſing of greatneſs which I never ſaw ?
Weak are my words ; for fate has caſt my birth
In the dull evening of the day of worth :
But ſtoried tell that light did once prevail,
And the ſweet ſongs of bards confirm the tale ;
Theſe ſay that nature ſmil'd with joy at noon,
When rays came darting from the glorious ſun :
But I too long in chaos did remain,
And now, alas ! I trace his ſteps in vain ;
Crouds who have ſeen him cry *the light divine*,
But tho' ſome eyes were bleſt, they were not mine ;
Yon weſtern hill has ſnatch'd him from my ſight,
And my ſoul trembles at th' approach of night ;
Concealing darkneſs ſpreads her awful gloom,
And muſic's words are haſt'ning to their tomb :
The language of the glens is left for death,
While jargon iſſues from the ſouth born breath ;
The growling accents * form'd by rules of art,
Reach not the ſoul, nor pierce into the heart.

The

* The bard was provoked to pronounce this ſevere cen-
ſure

THE ANTIENT CHIEF. 197

The moon with English rhetoric in her train,
Strives to supplant the setting sun in vain:

But

sure on the English language, from the liberty with which a gentleman from the south had once, in his presence, treated the Galic. He asserted, that it was an unintelligible jargon, which ought not to be permitted in a civilized nation. This assertion was translated to the bard, who gave his opinion of the English much in the same terms; and both parties continued to express a hearty contempt for what neither of them understood.

This, it is hoped, would be a sufficient apology for the austerity of the bard, had not I myself been guilty of an equal piece of rudeness in the preceding notes; and frequently accused the English language of being incapable to admit a multiplicity of beauties contained in the originals of these poems. Therefore, before I conclude this volume, it is reasonable I should produce more particular instances in support of these assertions. An examination of a passage, even of a modern composition, will illustrate this. It is taken from the works of a bard in the last century, when the office of bard and piper were united in one person.

'Sa mhaduinn aig èiridh le'r miolchoin,
Gu m'èirneach, maiseach, gasda, guiomhach,
Lubach, leacach, glacach, sgiamhach,
Carach, cabrach, enagach, fiamhach.

'Nam da'n ghrèin dol air a huilinn,
Gu fuilteach, rèubach, glàusda, gunnach,

B b

Snapach,

But feeble were her rays and dim she shone,
 Equal in nought but bulk to him that's gone.
 Yet absent brightness she insulting dares,
 And thinks she's great among the twinkling stars:
 These fled the presence of the fire of light,
 'Tho' now they blaze behind the queen of night.

So fled oppression once the glens of mirth,
 When ev'ry day gave new-born pleasures birth.

Small

Snapach, armach, calgach, ullamh,
 Riachach, marbhach, tarbhach, giullach.

In the first paragraph, the bard describes a chief and his party going out to the hunting in the morning. This description is contained in twelve beautiful and comprehensive terms in the three last lines, not one of which can be literally translated. Each of them contains a complete piece of imagery, and would require a paragraph to express it in English.

Having sent them to the field with all the accomplishments which the most fertile fancy could suggest, or the most strenuous exertion of rhetoric express, he leaves the imagination to form to itself the actions of the day, and proceeds immediately to describe their return in the evening, with the spoils of the chase, 'when the sun leans on his elbow' This is also done in twelve descriptive terms; the two first of which, representing the streaming blood and gaping wounds of the venison, may be translated literally; the rest are, like the other twelve, altogether inimitable.

Small was the tribute which the chieftain drew,
 Yet many were his flocks, his wants were few;
 His open table waited on the guest,
 Nor fasted thousands to provide the feast;
 He liv'd not on the sons of labour's spoil,
 Themselves enjoy'd the offspring of their toil,
 His arm gave aid, his face did joy inspire,
 But never—never quench'd the peasant's fire.

So rul'd the virtuous *Caledonian* sage
 In days which moderns term a barbarous age,
 In self-defence he drew the bloody dart;
 No mercenary priest corrupt his heart.
 Religious murder had not yet begun,
 Nor superstition half mankind undone:
 The gifts of nature to her sons were free;
 Thro' gratitude, not fear, man bent the knee.

Oh happy days! which will no more return;
 Thy vanish'd brightness I'll with anguish mourn.
 No more my harp shall tremble in the hall,
 Since I have liv'd to see my country fall;
 Her smoakless village and unpeopl'd glens,
 Point out the tyranny which holds her reins;
 The chief whose province 'twas to grant relief,
 Is the black cause of every piercing grief.
 Oh sons of pride! what havock have you wrought!
 What ruin on your wretched country brought!

You've

You've stab'd the bosom of a tott'ring state,
And broke that sword whose edge has made you
great;

Forc'd *Albin's* sons to quit their native land,
And seek protection from a savage band;
Driv'n by some chiefs of little soul from home,
To sink in boist'rous waves, or find a tomb.

So when with flinty sparks the fire of death
Blows the hot bullet from his smoaky breath,
The feeding stag comes tottering to the ground,
And echoing hills return the lofty sound;
The painful stings begin to stop his breath,
His half-chew'd mouthful drops upon the heath;
The hated note alarms the swift-foot train,
Who stretch each nerve to gain the distant glen.
The many horned foreheads cleave the wind;
With rapid speed the hills fly back behind.

So fly the sons of *Gael* oppression's rod,
So shun the paths that pale-fac'd tyrants trode.
Gone are our warriors, barren are our vales,
Yet I am left to tell these woeful tales;
To sing of those who under tyrants bend,
And mourn the evils which I cannot mend.

